

went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, when there was a fund set up—the overseas contingency account—not including any money in it, but it was a way to mask the fact that we were not funding the wars and we were in fact abusing deficit spending to do it.

So to continue that with the critical items in this bill is a mistake and, frankly, not worthy of the men and women who are on the frontlines, putting their lives—putting themselves—in harm's way every single day. So it is critical that we do better in terms of this budget and the structure of this budget.

Our families also deserve better, because we need to fully fund the full defense of our country—both here at home and overseas—without budget gimmicks, without adding to the deficit. All those things that create a strong country and security for our families need to be done in a way that does not include budget gimmicks. And that, frankly, is not what is being proposed.

That is why I am very proud to be a cosponsor of Senator REED's amendment, which would cap the spending on what has been called this overseas contingency account. Others of us at various points have called it the fake money account because there is no money in it. It is a fancy way of covering up the fact that we are spending and adding to the deficit. Senator REED would basically indicate that this would be capped. We would try to begin to rein that in, to cap that amount. We would also say very clearly that we are going to address the issues that affect the United States in terms of our strength, the defense, broadly, of our country—whether it is in the Department of Defense or whether it is in other parts of our overall budget as a Nation—by basically lifting the caps—for those watching, we talk about the Budget Control Act, but there are caps—in a way so we can fully fund both the Department of Defense but also the other things that need to be done to create security and to fully make sure our families are safe, our economy is safe, and that we are aggressively moving forward as an economy.

That is what Senator REED's amendment would do. It brings some balance. It begins to rein in what is a policy that does not make sense in terms of using budget gimmicks. As I said before, our troops certainly deserve better than that, and our families deserve better than that.

Using gimmicks is a convenient way to avoid dealing with what the real problem is. There is this thing called sequestration. People wonder: What in the world is that? We put in a policy a number of years ago to limit spending. The good news is that we have brought the annual budget deficit down by two thirds. This is good news for our country. Two thirds of the annual deficit is gone. But now, as we go forward and look at what is going to grow the econ-

omy and what is going to keep us safe, we look at the threats around the world that are coming at us—not just through the Department of Defense but through every area of the budget. When we look at what we need in terms of jobs and the economy and so on, we know we need to revisit that policy and stop the gimmicks. Don't use gimmicks going forward to pretend that we are still meeting sequestration but to look honestly at the needs of our country today and move forward.

Frankly, on the security front alone, security is more than just what happens at the Department of Defense, as important as that is. It is all of the programs that we rely on day in and day out to keep our country safe. Certainly, we care about border security all the time. That is not predominantly funded in the Department of Defense. We look at cyber security. It is one of the No. 1 issues we have, and we are hearing now from a consumer standpoint, from a security threat or terrorist standpoint, and from a business security standpoint. Cyber security is absolutely critical, and it is not given the same priority of importance as the Department of Defense is as we look at the overall defense of our country.

Counterterrorism—who answers the call, no matter what it is? In Boston, a terrorist attack—who was on the frontlines there? It was local police, local fire, which are under the broad budget parameters that are being discussed now by the majority. The Republican majority would provide less funding—less funding—for the frontline defense in our neighborhoods and in our communities.

Stopping weapons of mass destruction, airport security is something we all know about as we get on airplanes all the time, every week. There is Ebola protection, when we look at the Centers for Disease Control and all of the issues that relate to diseases—whether it is threats at home or whether it is those that can be used in some way as a terrorist attack. Many of the Federal agencies fighting terrorism at home and protecting us from deadly diseases such as Ebola will not receive critical funding under the budget that has been proposed.

Now, there is a willingness to use budget gimmicks in the Department of Defense. Again, our troops are certainly worthy of much more than budget gimmicks. But when we look more broadly at the whole budget, we don't even see enough to use budget gimmicks of these things. I don't think we should be using budget gimmicks, but the point is there is not an acknowledgement that there is more to defense and safety for our country than just in one department.

To be strong abroad we need to be strong at home, as well, and in so many other areas, as we know. If we want to talk about competing around the globe, if we want to talk about what we need to be doing to be secure, to have a robust economy, to

outcompete the competition, we have also to talk about educating our young people—which, by the way, is cut in the overall scheme of things in this budget. We have to talk about lowering the costs of college. If there is one thing we are hearing over and over from young people or from those going back to job training programs who lost their job in the economy, going back to get new skills to get a new job, it is about the huge debts they are incurring to do the right thing. People coming out of college are now in a situation where they can't qualify even to buy that first home. They are telling me: Do something about college loan debt. We can't help young people coming out of college to buy a house. They don't qualify because of the amount of debt, and the amount of debt they have will equal a house. That is a security issue for us—education, the ability to have a college education, job training.

Investing in cures for diseases—how exciting it is for us to hear about all the opportunities now through the National Institutes of Health. We have so many promising opportunities and treatments and cures, such as on Alzheimer's—which, by the way, takes one out of every five Medicare dollars—and in other areas, such as cancers, Parkinson's disease, mental health disorders. That is part of our strength and being secure and strong and robust for the future.

Of course, if we are going to be strong, we have to fix our roads and our bridges, and we don't have dollars in this budget. In fact, the whole highway trust fund is going to run out in less than 60 days now if no action is taken by the majority, if there is no sense of urgency from our Republican colleagues.

So we look overall at securing those things at home and abroad, whether it is making sure—beyond the Department of Defense—that we are funding our border security, cyber security, counterterrorism, police and fire departments, airport security, and Ebola protection or whether it is investing in our own people in all of this to create the opportunity for strong businesses, entrepreneurs, and an educated workforce or for infrastructure, making sure that we have those airports and we have those roads.

As I conclude, let me say that all of this leads to the fact that we need to next week vote yes on Senator REED's amendment because that is what it is all about: real safety, real security, growing the economy of our country. Our people deserve better than budget gimmicks that are in this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

OBAMACARE

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, it has been 5 years since Americans were forced into a broken and unhappy relationship with ObamaCare. Ever since

the implementation of this failed law, Americans have received one broken promise after another. For Montana families, reflecting on the consequences of this law is not a happy trip down memory lane. Too many Montanans have seen their work hours cut, they have been forced off the plans they liked, and they were told they could not see the doctors whom they trusted.

The reviews have been in for quite some time, and ObamaCare is not anything close to what Montanans were promised. Five years later, insurance companies are still unable to find stable rates that do not force more uncertainty and hardship upon Montanans. It has been widely reported across the country that rates for millions of Americans are set to skyrocket again. Look no further than Montana, where it is evident that health care premiums are not as affordable as President Obama promised they would be. Policies sold through ObamaCare exchanges are becoming even more expensive. In fact, in Montana, according to filings with the Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, insurers across the board are asking for double-digit increases for 2016 policies on top of more increases that occurred just last year.

Blue Cross Blue Shield, which is Montana's largest insurer that boasts 255,000 consumers in the State, is asking for an average increase of 23 percent for Montanans enrolled in individual plans. That is the start.

PacificSource filed papers with the commissioner requesting an average of a 31-percent increase for individual plans. What about Montana Health CO-OP? They have requested a 38-percent increase for individual plans. And Montanans who were insured under Time Insurance are facing a staggering 47-percent increase in 2016.

Increased premiums make it harder for Montanans to have access to affordable health care. It is money that no longer is in the pockets of Montanans, and those rate increases are not just in Montana. Across the Nation, Americans are seeing massive and debilitating rate increases. These hikes are a far cry from what Montanans—from what the American people were promised.

In 2007, President Obama said himself that by the end of his first term, ObamaCare would "cover every American and cut the cost of a typical family's premium by up to \$2,500 a year."

Montanans have not seen their premiums decreased by \$2,500 a year. It is not even close. Unfortunately, this is the predictable result of forcing a partisan piece of legislation through Congress without transparent consideration or bipartisan input. We need to ensure health care is affordable, and it needs to be accessible for all Montanans. That starts with repealing ObamaCare, repealing its costly mandates, repealing its burdensome taxes, and repealing the senseless regulations.

ObamaCare is not working and it is not popular. This law is a bureaucratic nightmare that hurts small businesses.

I just came out of a meeting with some homebuilders and small business owners from Montana. I showed them this chart before I came down to the floor. One of the builders said: This likely means I no longer will be able to provide health care insurance for my employees.

Growing up in Montana, I grew up hunting, camping, backpacking, fishing. In fact, I was fly fishing in Montana before Brad Pitt made it cool in the movie "A River Runs Through It." I know that when your fishing line gets tangled up, you have two options. I have been there many times on one of the banks of Montana's rivers. Sometimes you take a minute, sometimes you take several minutes, and you work to untangle the line. But other times the line gets so badly knotted up that the best option, instead of spending a long time untangling the line, is to simply cut the line.

After 5 failed years, the American people know ObamaCare is too badly tangled to fix. It is time to cut the line and tie on a new fly.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, I wish to begin my comments on this year's National Defense Authorization Act, S. 1376, by thanking all of the members of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. I would especially like to thank the subcommittee's chairman, Senator SESSIONS, for the close working relationship we share.

I want my colleagues to note that Senator SESSIONS and his staff worked closely with me and my staff in developing the elements of the bill pertaining to the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. This bipartisan effort has proved fruitful as all of our provisions were adopted unanimously by the full committee during the markup of this bill.

The annual National Defense Authorization Act is one of the most important pieces of legislation Congress passes every year, and this year will mark what I hope will be the passing of a defense authorization act for the 54th year in a row.

I would like to give my colleagues a brief overview of the provisions in what we will call the NDAA, which we are considering today, as they relate to the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

The jurisdiction of the subcommittee includes missile defense, strategic forces, space programs, the defense-funded portions of the Department of Energy, nonproliferation, and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

In preparing the provisions in the bill that relate to the areas of our jurisdiction, the subcommittee held six hearings and three briefings on defense programs at the Department of Energy, strategic nuclear forces, missile defense, and space programs at the Department of Defense.

As I mentioned before, our committee oversees the strategic nuclear forces based on a triad of air, sea, and land-based delivery platforms. This triad is, as Secretary Carter has called it, "the bedrock" of our national defense posture. In the wake of the Department of Defense's 2014 nuclear enterprise review, this is a significant year for reforms and investments to ensure the safety, security, and the effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent.

Among the key priorities going forward, I look forward to working with our leaders at the Department of Energy, at DOD, and my colleagues on the committee to take advantage of smart opportunities to enhance commonality across nuclear systems, sharing expertise and resources across the services—particularly the Navy and Air Force—to enhance the capabilities and cost-effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent in the future.

Critically, the bill creates a position in the Air Force responsible for nuclear command, control, and communications acquisition and policy. The Air Force is responsible for over 70 percent of this mission, which essentially connects the President to the nuclear weapon and the delivery platform. We have found that since the communications layers involve space, air, and ground systems, there is fragmentation in an overall strategy as we begin the modernization of the overall system, which must be fail-safe.

Through hearings and briefings concerning the state of other nations' nuclear programs, it was clear that we face an increasingly complex global nuclear environment. We are well past the days of the Cold War. Today, our deterrent strategy must now account for a wide range of nuclear-armed nations beyond simply Russia to now include Pakistan, India, North Korea, and even China's modernization of its strategic arsenal. Our bill contains a provision that directs the Office of Net Assessment to begin a study on what effect, if any, this multipolar nuclear environment will have on our deterrent strategy. This is an important area which will only grow as time goes on.

In the area of missile defense, this bill fully authorizes the President's budget request for the Missile Defense Agency and maintains our commitments to key allies. It includes several provisions that advance MDA's efforts to deploy additional sensors and to improve the reliability and effectiveness