

who have preexisting disabilities. Let's go back to that system. Let's go back to the system where if you have a child who has diabetes, you can't get that kid insured. If you have been in an automobile accident and you broke your neck—even if you are doing fine now, but from the doctor's reports it shows that you broke your neck—you can't get insurance. People with debilitating diseases now can get help.

The overwhelming majority of Americans, statistically, who enrolled in health care plans under the new law are satisfied with the coverage. The majority leader continues to missstate the facts on the Affordable Care Act. The latest poll shows that the majority of Americans support the law, as they should. So I don't know why my friend has to come here and make up things.

ObamaCare has been an important program for American families in Nevada and all over America. So I am very disappointed with the state of nonreality of my friend from Kentucky, who has come here each day this week to talk about ObamaCare and what is wrong with it. Before this law came into being, patients and the American people were subject to premium increases without any notice, cancellations without notice, denials for preexisting conditions, which I have already mentioned, and arbitrary limits on how much care insurance companies would cover.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. REID. The majority leader also came here and talked about how Democrats don't care about people in the armed services in America—that we don't care. In Nevada, I would compare our military installations and their contributions to a stellar military. Nobody surpasses what we do in Nevada. We have the finest Air Force training center in the world for people who fly fighter aircraft. They are all there. We have 10,000 civilian employees, and about 10,000 troops are stationed there. It has been in existence since it was called the Gunnery School in World War II. We are very proud of that. It is an important part of our community, and we protect it.

If you go north 350 miles, there is the Fallon Naval Air Training Center, which is a great installation, where if you want to fly on an aircraft carrier in America, that is where you train, at Fallon. TOPGUN is there. It is a wonderful facility, and we are proud of that facility. It doesn't have as many civilian personnel as Nellis. It is not as big and does not have as many active military, but it is an outstanding operation. People come from all over the world to train at Nellis—from all over the world. We have such a vastness in Nevada, and people train there. They can't do it anywhere else in the world.

So I would put my support of the military—I would certainly compare it to my friend the Republican leader. I

am sure he cares. I care also, and all 45 Members of the Democratic caucus care about the military. We care about it in a way that is not denigrating to the Internal Revenue Service that he keeps bashing.

One reason that the Internal Revenue Service has a tough time doing its job is because the Republicans keep cutting their budget. The head of the IRS came to see me a couple months ago, and said: We made it through the tax season. There were very few problems, but he said that if anyone wanted to call the IRS 2 months prior to the tax season ending, they couldn't answer the phones. They didn't have enough staff to do it.

The bill came out of the Armed Services Committee, and at that time, our leading member of that committee, JACK REED, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy said that the bill was flawed. It was flawed because he hoped we could fix the funding mechanism that the Republicans put in this—another unbelievably fictitious way of taking care of our government.

The chairman of that committee is somebody with whom I came from the House of Representatives 33 years ago. He came to the Senate together. He has been someone who has stood on this floor and berated phony spending. Where is he now? How could this man be in favor of deficit spending? How can he be in favor of OCO? He has spoken out openly against it in the past, but suddenly he is in favor of it.

The President said the minute that bill was taken up in the committee: If you don't change that, I am going to veto the bill—as he should. What we have said is we are going to support that. We believe what is in this bill is as fictitious as his account of what ObamaCare is all about. But my friend the Republican leader keeps talking about the leftwing: The leftwing is trying to kill this bill. We are not trying to kill the bill. We are trying to make sure we have programs in America that support the middle class, that support medical research, that support funding the FBI, and our court system. My friend the Republican leader seems only to care about the military. We care about the military, but we care about other things that lead to the security of this Nation.

We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the National Institutes of Health. We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Department of Homeland Security. We are not a secure Nation when we don't fund the Immigration and Naturalization Service. But my friend the Republican leader is saying: Don't worry about them. Just take care of the military. All this other stuff will work out.

The military is not secure, our government is not secure, and our homeland is not secure, when we have all these other agencies that are being, in effect, cut back in funding.

Now, on cyber security, we know the Presiding Officer of this body led the

Senate through some very important debates in recent days, and one of the things that was underlying everything done by the Presiding Officer was cyber security—maybe sometimes not directly, but that is in the background, always.

What does the Republican leader now come and say?

Look how much I am on cyber security. Look at me. I lifted weights this morning.

But what he has done is that now he is going to put cyber security on the bill the President said he is going to veto. We are stuck. We have 400 amendments filed, and we are not going through these amendments. He wants to be able to check off the box, saying: Well, we did cyber security.

He hasn't done cyber security. I have a quote here from him on cyber security, just a short time ago: "Any issue of this importance deserves serious consideration and open debate." This is what the Republican leader said. He says: Oh, we have done double the amendments that were done in the last couple of bills.

It takes two sides of the Senate to have amendments heard. The Republicans would not let us have open debate on the armed services bill the last two Congresses. We never even had a debate here. What happened is the two chairs of the committee met in secret and came up with a bill that came up to the Senate floor, and we were able to get that done. But for people to come here and say this is the 53rd year we have done the bill is a little fictitious itself.

I hope that my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, will get in touch with reality on ObamaCare, on the Defense authorization bill before this body, and on cyber security and stop making things up, because that is it. It is fiction, and it is not appropriate.

I was so disappointed yesterday to see my Republican colleagues vote against the amendment proposed by the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, the senior Senator from Rhode Island. His amendment would have done what no Republicans have even tried to do, which is to adequately address sequestration.

Sequestration was supposed to be so absurd and so foolish that it would force Congress to reduce the deficit in a sensible, balanced manner. On the floor now—I have said this before and I will say it again—I asked the senior Senator from Illinois who came to this House with me and with JOHN McCAIN 33 years ago: Would you do me a favor? We have this committee that the President has set up, and I need somebody that represents maybe a little bit left of center on this committee. Would you do it? He had many other obligations, but he agreed to be on the Bowles-Simpson Commission, and he did a stunningly important good job. He supported the financing of that. Quite frankly, that surprised me because of all the people yelling for all these

budget cuts, and many of those voted against it in the committee. Now, no one in this body understands sequestration any better than my friend from Illinois.

Sequestration was supposed to be so absurd—I repeat—so foolish, that it would force Congress to balance in a sensible manner. Yet what the Republicans considered lunacy a few years ago is now the preferred form of legislating, the preferred form of budgeting. That tells you everything you need to know about today's Republican Party. They are beating their chests about how great sequestration is. Isn't it great that all of these Federal agencies are being cut.

The Reed amendment would have allowed the Democrats and Republicans to negotiate a balanced budget and would have rescinded sequestration, while ensuring adequate funding to the Department of Defense and nondefense programs. Instead, by rejecting Senator REED's legislation, the Republicans have effectively said spend first, budget later. Here is what they have come up with. They are saying: Ready, fire, aim. Or they are saying: Fire, ready, aim. We know they are not saying: Ready, aim, fire. They have it all backwards, like everything they have done here legislatively—like ostriches with their heads buried deep in the sand.

The majority leader and Republicans continue to deny the need for a bipartisan budget. They deny the need to fix sequestration, just as they deny the urgent need to authorize the Export-Import Bank, which employs 165,000 people in America, as we speak. It expires at the end of this month.

They deny the urgent need to fix our roads, rails, and bridges. That program is going to expire in 6 weeks, which creates millions of jobs—millions of jobs.

Regardless of what Republicans tell themselves, they cannot wish these important issues to just disappear. It is our job to address these matters that affect working Americans.

Here we are in June, months before funding for the government runs out. We have plenty of time to sit down and work out an agreement that both sides can work out. It appears to me what the Republicans are doing is that we are heading for another shutdown. They did it once; they are going to do it again. They want to do nothing now. They want to wait until the fiscal year ends and then lock it up—close up government. There is no reason for this to become yet another manufactured crisis, and that is what we have here.

We can, I repeat, months before the funding for government runs out, do something about it. Do they desire another closed government? I hope not. But it appears that is where we are headed. The Republicans are unwilling to do things that are real. So I urge my Republican colleagues to change course, instead of barreling ahead with bills they know are going to fail.

The Defense authorization bill, the President is going to veto. The veto will be upheld. We will do it over here. But the House already has enough votes to sustain the President's veto. It is just moving forward for reasons that I do not fully understand. I urge them to change course, work with us to forge an agreement that can get signed into law.

The majority leader's party can continue to ignore and procrastinate all they want, but eventually we will need to negotiate a budget free of sequestration, a budget that protects our military and also nondefense, our middle class. Eventually, we will need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank, I repeat, which sustains hundreds of thousands of jobs and is responsible for billions of dollars in U.S. exports.

Now, eventually we need to find a lasting way to fund on a long-term basis our American highways. Fifty percent of our highways are deficient, 64,000 bridges—50 percent of those are structurally deficient. Not far from here, over the great Memorial Bridge, they are closing two lanes. Why? Because it has rotted away. Hundreds of thousands of people go over that every day—or they used to. So why wait? Instead of waiting for the President to veto their sham funding mechanism and then scramble to craft some last-minute, hastily wrought continuing resolution, the Republicans should work with us on a bipartisan solution now. We are ready to cooperate with Republicans to pass legislation that keeps America safe and protects the middle class. But to do that, my Republican colleagues will first have to pull their heads out of the sand.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half.

The assistant Democratic leader.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are considering this bill, and you can see by the size of it, it is a major undertaking. It comes up every year. It is the Department of Defense Authorization Act. It is an extraordinarily important bill. It literally authorizes programs for the defense of America.

We have two able leaders who brought the bill to the floor. One is the

chairman of the Armed Services Committee, JOHN McCAIN, a man with whom I entered the House many years ago and a man whose reputation and service to America is well known. He is someone who has served in the U.S. Navy, was a prisoner of war during the Vietnam war, and has been a leader in speaking out on behalf of the military throughout his life. It is built into his family. It is built into his soul.

On our side, we have Senator JACK REED from Rhode Island. Senator REED is a graduate of the West Point Military Academy. He served as well in the Active Army. He brings that service, that part of his life to his work on the Democratic side of the aisle. When it came to putting this bill together, I do not think we could have picked two more able leaders from the Senate, a Republican and a Democrat, to bring this bill to the floor.

They have their differences. But for the most part they agree on this bill. It was troubling this morning to hear the Republican majority leader suggest that the differences we have over this bill suggest a lack of commitment by Democrats to the military of the United States. That is not true. It is not fair. We are as committed on our side of the aisle as those on the other side of the aisle when it comes to the men and women in uniform—committed to making certain that they have what they need to be trained, to fight effectively, and to come home safely.

We are also committed to bringing them home to a welcoming America, preparing veterans programs for the rest of their lives, so they can have productive lives, happy lives after having risked their lives for America.

So to suggest that the Republicans are for the military and Democrats are against it, I regret that the majority leader made that suggestion. Both sides are committed—both the chairman and the ranking member are committed. But what is the issue that divides us when it comes to this bill? It is basically an issue of funding. Here is what it comes down to: We have a Budget Control Act, and if we do not hit the numbers in spending, in comes sequestration. What is sequestration? It is an across-the-board cut.

We do not want to see that happen. We have seen it. We know what it does. It was devastating to the Department of Defense when we went into sequestration. I know because I chaired the Appropriations Committee and I listened to the Secretary of Defense and the leaders from our branches and services tell us: It is impossible for us to budget an effective national security if we have to wonder whether we are going to face an across-the-board cut. I can understand that, not only in readiness, which is essential to the survival of our troops, but also in the procurement of substantial, expensive, important, and necessary technology.

So Senator McCANN on the Republican side brings to the floor this authorization bill and says: We will solve