

It is a simple choice: Senators can either vote to protect women's health or they can vote to protect subsidies for a political group mired in scandal.

I know Planned Parenthood's entrenched lobbyists have been close allies of Democrats in recent years, but this moment calls for Senators to rise higher and to think bigger.

Let's not filibuster women's health in order to protect special subsidies for one scandal-plagued political organization. Why don't we join together instead to bring something positive to the American people from a terrible situation.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Republican legislation to attack women's health is disguised as a way to help women. We have to look long and hard to find those people who are being taken care of across the country today because of programs that allow them to go to someone who knows what they are talking about when they are concerned about their fertility, they are concerned about birth control, and a myriad of other problems that happen as women go through life.

The Republican bill pretends to be for women's health, but it would prohibit Federal funds to go to an organization that is the health care backbone for American women during their lives. In fact, it is the only health care that a significant number of women get. For about 30 percent of women, that is their health care. You can disguise this by giving fancy titles to the legislation any way you want. This is an attack on women's health.

It is stunning to me that the 16 people who are running for President are out there going after immigration. They are going after not only immigration generally but specifically. These young men and women who came to America—and the face of this picture in Nevada is a woman by the name of Astrid Silva, who came here as a little girl with her mother in a boat across the Rio Grande River with her little doll and her rosary beads that she didn't understand—a little, little girl. She knew no other country. What do the Republicans want to do? They want to deport Astrid Silva, a woman who finally because of the courageous action of President Obama—because Republicans refused to do anything on immigration—was allowed to get her driver's license, to fly in an airplane for the first time, to be able to go to the airport without fear of being arrested, and they want to do away with that. But that is not enough.

Most of them want to privatize Social Security; they want to change it in some significant way. It is led by one

President's son, one President's brother who basically said we have to change Medicare, as he was speaking to the Koch brothers.

We are working, trying to get the Ex-Im Bank that affects the lives of 165,000 working Americans. Most of the Republicans want to get rid of that. Now the program is out of sync. It has expired.

The environment. Don't worry about it; it is fine. The icecaps are melting in the Arctic. Don't worry about it. We have the worst fires in the history of Alaska because of climate change. Don't worry about it; it is only 5 million acres that burned this summer so far. The droughts are affecting all of America but especially the West. It is so bad in the West that in the Sierras there are bears that don't even hibernate anymore. It is not cold enough. In New Hampshire, moose are dying. About one-third of them are dead because of fleas and ticks. Why? Because it is not cold enough to kill them anymore. These little pests are ravaging these huge animals.

I could go on, but I am going to stop, other than to say, in addition to all of that, now they are after women's health.

I hope they understand the pretty posters and the fancy words—no matter how you package it—are an attack on women. Indirectly, it is an attack on my daughter, my wife, and my grandchildren directly. I should say my granddaughters directly. I have a few of them.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Constitution is very clear. It says the Government cannot spend a penny without an appropriations law—a law dealing with appropriations.

I am so fortunate, when I came to the Senate, I became a member of the Appropriations Committee. I loved working on the Appropriations Committee. Under John Stennis from Mississippi, Robert Byrd from West Virginia, and Dan Inouye from Hawaii, it was a wonderful process.

I have this job. I got off the committee, which was very hard for me to do because I loved that committee. We worked very hard every year to fund every one of those 12 appropriations bills. We did it because we were legislators. We compromised. We worked together to fund this government, but all of that is gone.

Republicans do not work with us on appropriations bills. We don't do them anymore. This season of Republicanism is more than I can hardly understand. I certainly don't appreciate it. No job is more important in the Constitution than exercising the power of the purse. That is our responsibility, but that has been taken away from us by convoluted methods.

I know my Republican colleagues will get up and say we have to do something about this terrible debt. Seated

next to me in this august Chamber of the Senate is a man who is the senior Senator from Illinois. I have said this before, and I will say it again. The reason I mention his name is because I knew we needed to do something about the debt. I arranged a long trip—my first job as leader—to Central and South America, and I took Judd Gregg, a Republican from New Hampshire, who is an expert on the finances of this government, and a Democratic counterpart, Kent Conrad, who is just as good. They worked on that airplane side by side for 14 hours and worked up a plan. What they came up with was so brilliant. They said: What we are going to do is have a plan just like the base closings.

The base closing commissions that were set up—we did two rounds of them—got rid of military bases in the country that we were trying to get rid of prior to World War II. We were able to do that, and as a result, we saved the country billions and billions of dollars.

They introduced legislation that said that we are going to have a commission appointed. There will be legislators, and there will be people the President appoints and people from the outside. They will report to us, and there will be no filibusters, no amendments, and we will have an up-or-down vote. It was a great piece of legislation.

When I brought that legislation to the floor, seven Republican Senators who cosponsored the legislation refused to vote for it, and we weren't able to move forward on it. Now I get to my friend from Illinois. I had the ability to appoint three Members of my caucus to be on the Bowles-Simpson Commission. The President did that because what Judd Gregg and Kent Conrad tried to do failed. To his credit, he did that. I needed a liberal. My friend and I are not afraid to use that term—a progressive, if that makes people feel better. He didn't want to do that. He did it because it was the best thing for this institution. He sat through days and days of hearings and became a believer that we had to do something about the debt. He voted for something that Republicans didn't vote for—to do something about the debt.

I say to the Presiding Officer and to everybody within the sound of my voice: We have done something since then. We have reduced the debt of this country by \$4 trillion. That doesn't mean we don't have a lot more to do. But what virtually all economists tell us is that we are at a point now where we have to start spending some money.

My friend from California has worked hard on this highway bill. It was hard for her to do that because the Republicans weren't allowing her to come up with any new revenue.

Anyway, my point is this: The Republicans are failing their most important job, and that is helping us come up with some spending programs. We called on the Republicans to get serious about budgeting. They have refused. We have pleaded with them to

sit down and negotiate a long-term bipartisan plan to avoid another shutdown. From the start, it has been clear that Republicans are not serious about governing.

A party that is serious about governing does not do the things they have done. For example, in the wake of mass shootings by individuals—it is in every newspaper in the country, and it has been for weeks. There were new deaths in Tennessee and Colorado. It doesn't matter. I am sorry to say that we have lost track of where they all are.

Even after these mass shootings, Republicans still want to cut our funding for mental health services. Gee-whiz—how could they do that? The Republican bill cuts funding for substance abuse and mental health services. They blocked research for funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the cause and effect of gun violence. They are cutting funding for counseling programs in elementary and secondary schools. That is only on one subject. A party that is serious about governing doesn't cut critical funding to our Nation's security. They have cut funding for the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms, they cut funding to vital cyber-security upgrades and financial agencies. They cut funding for U.S. marshals, the brave men and women who helped to catch those two murderers who escaped from the prison in New York.

A party that is serious about governing doesn't wage war against our Nation's infrastructure. They have cut funding for the Nation's electric grid by 40 percent, leaving our utilities susceptible to cyber attacks. Senate Republicans have cut transit projects all across this country. They have cut funding of the air traffic control system. The list is endless. There are cuts to education, women's health, agriculture, energy, and job training.

If the Republican leader and the Speaker wanted to get serious about governing, they would sit down with us and craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown.

On the bill before us, the Speaker of the House of Representatives has referred to that bill by using a very derogatory word which starts with the letter "s." If the Republican leader and the Speaker want to get serious about governing, then they need to sit down with us so we can craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown. Instead they have already given up. Both the Speaker and the Republican leader have said that what we are going to do is abandon the appropriations process in favor of a continuing resolution, which is a buzzword for failure. Failure is another word for a government shutdown. It is another way to close our government.

By relying on a continuing resolution, it leaves in place sequester cuts and underfunds critical priorities for working American families. Republicans are neglecting their responsibilities. They are not showing up for

work. It doesn't have to be this way. We have time to come up with a balanced solution to keep our government funded. We have 2 months to come together, but a CR will not work. Sequestration will kick in, and it will harm every agency in the government. It will especially hurt the middle class of our country. If they are serious about governing, they will work together with us on appropriations bills rather than ignore us.

Republicans need to sit down and get to work on their most important job, as is dictated by the Constitution.

I apologize to everyone for taking more time than I normally do, but it was brought about by my friend the Republican leader.

I ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 22, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell modified amendment No. 2266, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 2421 (to amendment No. 2266), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell (for Inhofe) amendment No. 2533 (to amendment No. 2421), relating to Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs.

McConnell amendment No. 2417 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2266), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2418 (to amendment No. 2417), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. 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. INHOFE. 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, I had some time reserved, and I am halfway through that time now. So I will talk a little faster than usual because we have an Armed Services meeting right now, and we are trying get to the bottom of this side agreement that was apparently made with Iran.

I wish to applaud the Senate for taking another step, and that is what we are going to be doing in just a few minutes with the DRIVE Act in Congress with these votes, and tomorrow we expect to see a final vote for passage so we can send it to the House. This will be my sixth reauthorization over the past number of years. These bills are all about compromise. It is hard to do. There are a lot of Members of this body who didn't think they got what they wanted in this bill, and I have to say that I didn't get what I wanted. I suspect that the occupier of the chair didn't get what he wanted, and Senator BOXER didn't get what she wanted. That is not the way this works because this is a bill to get us away from the short-term extensions.

It has been obvious that Members of this body are opposed to moving to a 6-year reauthorization bill and are willing to use any procedural means to slow it down, and that is what happened. If we had not dragged on yesterday, and if we had yielded back some of the time, we could have had these votes that we are about to have now yesterday. If we had done that, we could have final passage today, and it would be sent over to the House before they leave. They are going to leave. That doesn't mean that this is not important. What we are doing today and tomorrow is passing this bill. Even though the House is going home, they all agree that we need a good, long-term bill as soon as they get back. That is why we have a motion before us for a short-term delay—so they will have time to do it.

We will have a good bill for them. We have worked on it for several months. It passed out of committee unanimously. Every Republican and every Democrat voted for it. We will have a chance to do that.

Also, I have State sheets on every State. I can read off how every State benefits from this 6-year reauthorization bill. All you have to do is talk to the Governors, mayors, and the departments of transportation across the country. They fully expected Congress only to deliver piecemeal extensions, as we have in the past.

We have to keep in mind that the last reauthorization bill that we had was in 2005. I remember that vividly because I was the author of the bill. When we passed it, everyone rejoiced. Yesterday the Senator from Minnesota was talking about the tragedy of the fallen bridge in Minnesota, where 13 people died. I told the story about how a bridge in Oklahoma City had a chunk of concrete fall off of it and hit a mother of three children and kill her. You don't want to wait until this happens.

We have bridges in this country—and we have talked about each one of them on the Senate floor during the discussion on this bill—that are deteriorating, and we have to do something about it.

If any Member or the staff of any Member—I know the staffs are all