

to fund the government for fiscal year 2016, which begins October 1, 2015.

I congratulate Chairman COCHRAN and his subcommittee chairs for a full and open process. They worked hand in hand with me and my ranking Democratic members. But their bills are based on the postsequester levels of the Republican budget resolution. The bills reported by the committee are too spartan to meet the needs of the American people.

The difference between the Republican budget and the President's budget request is \$74 billion. That is a lot. But even with that increase, the discretionary top line will be equal to what we spent in 2010, 6 years ago.

I would like to talk about one example of the real impact of the Republican sequester level budget—failing our veterans.

Veterans deserve promises made and promises kept. Instead, the Senate fiscal year 2016 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill is at least \$857 million short of what is needed for veteran health care. And the House is even worse, at least \$1.4 billion below what is needed. At those levels, about 70,000 fewer veterans will receive medical care.

Despite record demand for services, our veterans are still waiting to get appointments at hospitals and clinics. In fact, the electronic wait list has grown by almost 10,000 over the past 2 months. Sequester will result in waitlists growing exponentially.

Sequester budgeting for veterans' medical care means almost 150,000 veterans living with hepatitis C will be in limbo, not receiving new, lifesaving drugs.

It is not just care that is short-changed. Sequester budgeting means hospitals and clinics continue to deteriorate. The VA has identified between \$10 billion and \$12 billion of backlogged code violations and deficiencies at hospitals and clinics across the country. In fiscal year 2013, the VA spent \$1.3 billion repairing clinics, but for fiscal year 2016 the Republican bills cut funding in half, even as the backlog grows.

Yesterday, the Republican leader stated that he did not want a government shutdown. Encouragingly, he added, "At some point we'll negotiate the way forward."

Democrats are ready. Since May, we have been asking to negotiate to eliminate sequester with a sequel to Murray-Ryan. The only way we will have shutdown, showdown, and government by self-made crisis is if the Republican majority refuses to send the President bills he can sign and instead sends bills that are too spartan or contain poison pill riders like prohibiting funding for Planned Parenthood or signature initiatives like the Affordable Care Act and climate pollution rules.

Whether it is funding our troops or keeping our promises to veterans, we can't do it without a new budget deal. Freezing Federal spending doesn't meet the growing, complex needs of the Nation.

None of us were elected to make America weaker. Yet sequester makes us weaker and sequester hollows out America.

America deserves better, but we need a new budget deal to do it. Democrats are ready to get serious and get to the table. We need to end sequester for defense with no more gimmicks and end sequester for programs not funded in the defense bill that protect our country and make it great.

DRIVE ACT

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President last week the Senate passed a multiyear surface transportation bill, the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy Act, H.R. 22, referred to as the DRIVE Act. I was pleased to vote for this bipartisan bill. For the first time in 3 years, the Senate has passed a long-term surface transportation bill. Unfortunately, the House adjourned before taking up our bipartisan legislation—forcing the Senate to pass a short-term funding patch, the 34th since 2009.

I am disappointed that we were not able to get the long-term bill to the President's desk. However, I believe the Senate has laid the groundwork to make the most recent short-term extension the last for the next few years. I look forward to working with my colleagues in both houses of Congress to complete a long-term bill before the October 29 deadline, and I expect the DRIVE Act to be the baseline for those efforts.

While the DRIVE Act's most important feature is that it provides certainty to construction firms and state governments to invest in rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges, it also includes several provisions to improve the way we move goods and people across our nation. In the last few years, I have become very concerned with the way one particular good—Bakken oil—moves through the country. The fiery explosions that accompany Bakken oil train derailments have many in Wisconsin rightfully concerned as we have unwittingly become one of the most traveled oil train routes in the country.

The DRIVE Act includes a rail safety bill that was added thanks to the leadership of Senate Commerce Committee Chairman THUNE, Ranking Member NELSON, and Senators BOOKER and WICKER. I was pleased that the bipartisan bill that passed out of committee included provisions to require a railroad liability study and comprehensive oil spill response plans. These provisions were similar to what is included in the Crude-by-Rail Safety Act, on which I worked closely with Senator CANTWELL to introduce.

While the liability study and oilspill response plans are steps in the right direction, as the bill moved to the Senate floor, I believed we needed to do more to improve rail infrastructure, transparency, and first responder prepared-

ness. That is why I was pleased to work with Environment and Public Works Ranking Member BARBARA BOXER, Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee Chairman JOHN THUNE and Ranking Member BILL NELSON as well as Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL to include two sections in the bill that passed the Senate on July 30. I was able to add these sections to the substitute amendment, No. 2266, that was adopted on July 29, 2015, and the provisions were included in the final version of the bill that passed the Senate.

The first section, section 35416, would require that the Federal Railroad Administration keep on file the most recent bridge inspection report prepared by a private railroad bridge owner and provide that report to appropriate state and local officials upon request. This allows State and local officials who are responsible for public infrastructure integrity and public safety to have access to information they need to keep the public safe. The substance of this section is also contained in amendment 2538.

The second section, section 35431, addresses concerns raised by the first responder community who have had to fight for access to real-time information about hazmat trains entering their jurisdictions. Firefighters want to know in advance when hazmat trains will arrive in order to better prepare and keep their communities safe. The substance of this section is also contained in amendment 2539.

The section modified the bill's original language that only required real-time hazmat train information to go to Department of Homeland Security Fusion Centers. The centers would then provide the information to local first responders only in the event of an accident, when it is less useful. My provision requires fusion centers to provide the real-time information to State and local first responders at least 12 hours prior to a hazmat train arriving in their jurisdiction. The transmission must also include the best estimate of the train's arrival.

I believe these two sections significantly improve transparency and safety in communities along oil train routes. This is also a significant achievement for state and local organizations, who are often powerless to take action against federally regulated railroads—despite being responsible for any problems they cause. In closing, I again would like to thank Senators MCCONNELL, THUNE, NELSON, BOXER, and INHOFE for their leadership on this legislation. And I pledge to work with my colleagues in the House and Senate to pass a long-term surface transportation bill in the next three months.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today marks the 50th anniversary of one of the most important civil rights bills we have ever come together as a nation to pass: the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

I am proud to commemorate this anniversary as the Senator for Maryland. Marylanders have a rich history of battling discrimination, going back to the darkest days of slavery. The brilliant Frederick Douglass was the voice of the voiceless in the struggle against slavery. The courageous Harriet Tubman delivered 300 slaves to freedom on her Underground Railroad. And the great Thurgood Marshall went from arguing *Brown v. Board of Education* to serving as a Supreme Court Justice. All were Marylanders.

Not just Marylanders but civil rights leaders and activists from all over this country fought hard for the right to vote. Over 600 people marched from Selma to Montgomery. They were stopped and beaten but not defeated. These brave men and women continued to march, continued to fight until they got the right to vote. They had to challenge the establishment and to say “now” when others told them to “wait”.

Their fight and their struggle culminated in the passage of the Voting Rights Act. This legislation guaranteed one of our most important civil rights and reflected one of our most fundamental values: that all men and women have the right to vote.

The struggle to truly fulfill this fundamental value—this fundamental right—is far from over. There are too many neighborhoods in this country, particularly in minority communities, that are the target of voter intimidation, barriers to access, and ever-changing requirements.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* only made this problem worse by stripping the Federal Government of its ability to protect voters from this kind of disenfranchisement—whether it was the old-fashioned kind or the new-fashioned kind.

The fight for equal access to the ballot continues today, and like those who came before us, we cannot take “no” for an answer. We must ensure that any and all undue barriers to participation in our democracy are broken down. We must restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act that were struck down by the Supreme Court so that the promise of the right to vote is extended to all men and women.

So while we look back proudly on the passage of the Voting Rights Act, we must recognize that the need for its protections is as great today as it was 50 years ago. The words of Justice Thurgood Marshall still ring true:

“I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust. . . . We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.”

Today marks an important milestone in our history. As we come together to celebrate this anniversary, we must

come together to defend the rights that this legislation was enacted to protect because if discrimination of any kind exists anywhere in America, we can and we must do better.

REMEMBERING RICHARD SCHWEIKER

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President. I rise today to remember Richard Schweiker, who passed away on July 31, 2015. Congressman, Senator, and Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Dick Schweiker honorably served his country in public office for more than two decades. Prior to his years of government service, he served his country in the Navy during World War II.

As a Congressman from Pennsylvania's 13th District, he was the coauthor of a House Armed Services Committee proposal to end the military draft and make service voluntary and sponsored legislation to allow the government to give extra money to military service personnel if they showed they could reduce expenses. He also supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 along with legislation that created the Medicare and Medicaid Programs.

As a Senator, he served on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, eventually becoming its ranking member. This committee is now known as the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on which I serve. Senator Schweiker was a strong supporter of public health initiatives, including the National Diabetes Mellitus Research and Education Act that authorized the National Commission on Diabetes to put together a plan to fight this disease. Dick Schweiker also worked to achieve compromise. In a 2000 Associated Press interview, he commented on that approach:

I was a World War II veteran. Our primary objective was to get things done and solve problems. The partisanship and heated rhetoric that have taken over the political landscape wasn't always in vogue.

Dick Schweiker decided not to run for reelection in 1980 and worked to help elect Ronald Reagan that November. After the election, President Reagan appointed Schweiker as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. While in that position, he set up the Medicare prospective payment system in an effort to reduce costs rather than leaving them open-ended. He also continued to support funding for medical research and protected funding for the Head Start early childhood education program. He stepped down as Secretary in 1983. At that time, Senator Ted Kennedy said the following:

Dick Schweiker has been a good friend and colleague for many years. As secretary of HHS, he has too often been a lonely voice of compassion and humanity.

After leaving public service, Dick Schweiker spent 11 years as president of the American Council of Life Insur-

ance before retiring. Today, we remember and thank Dick Schweiker for his service to Pennsylvania and the Nation. We send our thoughts and prayers to his family.

RECOGNIZING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on August 14, 1945, World War II came to an end. The official ceremony aboard the battleship USS Missouri 2 weeks later was brief, barely 18 minutes long. The low-key nature of the event stood in stark contrast to the unprecedented horror and violence of the preceding years, years in which the fate of civilization itself hung in the balance. I rise today to express our Nation's gratitude to all veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine for their service and sacrifice seven decades ago.

It is said that crisis builds character. For an entire generation of Americans, crisis did not build character; it revealed it. With the perfect hindsight history books provide, the Second World War can seem today to be a series of events that followed an inevitable course from Pearl Harbor to Normandy to Iwo Jima to the deck of the Battleship Missouri. Yet those who were there, those who made that history, know that the outcome was far from certain. All that stood between humanity and the abyss of tyranny was their courage, their faith, and their devotion to duty.

As the war began, the United States was not a rich or powerful country. We had only the 17th largest army in the world. Our industries were still struggling to overcome a decade of economic depression. With two great oceans as a buffer, many Americans thought the answer to aggression was isolationism.

Yet when the crisis came, Americans responded. More than 16 million American men put on the uniforms of our Armed Forces. More than 400,000 died wearing those uniforms. Thousands of American women also put on the uniform, serving—and dying—in field hospitals and in such dangerous work as ferrying aircraft from production plant to airfield. They rolled up their sleeves and turned the factories of a peacetime economy into the arsenal of democracy. Throughout the country, Americans of all ages worked and saved and rationed and sacrificed as never before. Families planted victory gardens—20 million of them, producing 40 percent of the Nation's vegetables in backyards and on rooftops. Two out of every three citizens put money into war bonds.

The people of Maine were part of this great endeavor. Some 80,000 Mainers served in World War II, more than any previous war. More than 2,500 laid their lives upon the altar of freedom.

I have had the honor of meeting many of Maine's heroes. Edward Dahlgren of Perham—just a few miles from my hometown of Caribou—fought his