Governor of Nevada. We ran independent of one another. We wound up being Governor and Lieutenant Governor. He was a devout Catholic. The values he instilled in me stemmed from his faith. He was the most honest man I ever met. He was a devout Catholic, as I indicated. He went to mass virtually every day.

He died—every place he went, it was early. He got to morning mass, 7 o'clock mass, early. It had not started. The priest had not come out yet. He put his head on his shoulder and died. He was such a good man. Those of us who knew him—and so many people knew him—know that he would have enjoyed living in a time where His Holiness is known not just for his influence, knowledge, and righteousness but for his good deeds and kindness to those in need. My friend Mike O'Callaghan had a lot of those same traits.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in just 6 days, the government will shut down unless we figure out some way to fund it. We know how it should be funded. But instead of voting today on a bipartisan way forward, we will still have another failed vote, even though the Senate has already spoken on this issue. Instead of using the Senate's precious time to avoid a shutdown, Republicans are causing us to move forward on another squandered vote.

Republicans should abandon their commitment to fruitless votes and pass a clean funding bill to keep the government open. As reported in the press, there is a conversation going on now with the White House and with the House and Senate leaders to have funding until the end of the year, not for a few weeks, not for a few months. I think we have done our part over on this side of the aisle. We communicated our priorities and tried to sit down at the negotiating table, ready to keep the government open.

Inserting into this debate a meaningless, losing attack on women is just a waste of time, but they have decided—they the Republicans have decided—once again to place partisan, ideological agendas over the well-being of the Nation. To drag this partisan attack on any further when we are facing a government shutdown is not responsible. The Republicans should change their tactics. When Republicans gained control of the Senate, we were told that there would be no government shutdowns. But do we need the fear of a government shutdown? Shutting down is bad, the threat of a shutdown is not good, but here we stand, days before funding for the government expires, wasting time on publicity stunts.

Every moment Republicans squander on pointless votes brings us closer to an unfunded Federal Government. Wasting time also leads to a void for shutdown advocates. Just last night, all over the news, it was reported that the junior Senator from Texas is going to extreme lengths to undermine the complete funding of our government. He is circulating a letter seeking support for a failed strategy that can only have one outcome: a government shutdown.

I would hope my Republican colleagues will not join in that, not for a minute, not for any period of time. I say to my friends from the other side of the aisle: Stop this brinksmanship. Instead, work with Democrats to ensure we have an open, funded government serving the American people.

I see there are Senators on the floor. Would the Presiding Officer be good enough 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.J. Res. 61, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 61) amending 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 (for Cochran) amendment No. 2669, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2670 (to amendment No. 2669), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2671 (to amendment No. 2670), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2672 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2669), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2673 (to amendment No. 2672), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell motion to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 2674, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2675 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2674), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 2676 (to amendment No. 2675), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. will be equally divided between the leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Utah.

REMEMBERING ELDER RICHARD G. SCOTT

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Elder Richard G. Scott, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who passed away September 22, 2015, at the age of 86.

Richard G. Scott had the razor-sharp mind of an engineer, fused with the tender softness of a disciple's soul.

A graduate of George Washington University in mechanical engineering, who did post-graduate training in nuclear engineering, he had a brilliant mind with an uncanny capacity for formulas, projections, and calculations. Yet he became known throughout the world for an enormous heart with an equally uncanny capacity to love and to have empathy for people from every walk of life.

Elder Scott's gentle voice invited all who had lost their way, who had given up hope or had wandered far to come home, home to the faith, family, and community that would bring them real peace and lasting, genuine joy.

Countless individuals around the world heard his invitation to come home and rightly felt that he was talking directly to them. Ever in search of the one who was lost—Elder Scott's words and witness of Jesus Christ served as the lower lights upon the shore to gently guide many a wanderer home.

Elder Scott had an extraordinary depth of empathy, particularly for those who silently suffered and anxiously sought for relief, redemption, and renewal in the midst of life's storms. He, himself, was a man acquainted with grief, having lost two young children and later his wife Jeanene to untimely deaths. He also seemed to intimately understand the feelings of deep discouragement, overwhelming uncertainty, as well as the crushing avalanche of personal inadequacy that can descend upon the human soul during difficult days and trying times. Yet he continually stood as a beacon of hope to those who struggled because he knew with an absolute certainty to what source we should look for strength and security during such days and at such times.

His complete love for and belief in the divine potential of each and every soul led him to speak plainly, powerfully, and often with tender, heartfelt, personal feelings. He urged the struggling as well as the faithful to cast aside any behavior, habit or belief that weighed them down or kept them from living up to their full potential. Members of the LDS Church all around the world often felt, as they watched him speak, that he was not only speaking specifically to them but also that he was looking straight into their souls. In truth, he was just speaking with such love, empathy, and genuine compassion that he empowered his listeners to look into their own hearts and see what their Savior saw in them.

Elder Scott saw people not for where they were currently positioned on the road of life but for the potential each person had to do, be, and become more. He once declared: ''We become what we want to be by consistently being what we want to become each day.''

Elder Scott's vision extended far beyond the struggles of mortality; he focused on raising our sights to higher things, grander places, and more noble thoughts.

The role of the family as the bulwark of society was paramount in his life and teachings. Elder Scott often expressed his belief in the unparalleled power and influence that a man and a woman, equally yoked as husband and wife, could have on children and communities. He taught that in marriage oneness is not sameness and of the vital importance of valuing our differences. To illustrate, he once declared: ''I may not know what it means to be a woman, but I do know what it means to be taught by one and to love one with all my heart and all my soul.'' His love for his wife Jeanene was legendary and was forever sprinkled into his sermons. I take comfort in knowing that after nearly 20 years, Elder Scott has gone to that Heavenly home he so often pointed to and is once again united with Jeanene.

One of Elder Scott's colleagues described him as a clever teacher. His formula for teaching was not of the engineering variety but rather followed a pattern described in a hymn by Lorin Wheelwright entitled ''Help Me Teach with Inspiration,'' which says:

Help me teach with inspiration; Grant this blessing, Lord, I pray.
Help me lift a soul's ambition To a higher, nobler way.
Help me reach a friend in darkness; Help me guide him thru the night.
Help me show thy path to glory By the Spirit's holy light.
Help me find thy lambs who wander; Help me bring them to thy keep.
Teach me, Lord, to be a shepherd; Father, help me feed thy sheep.

Elder Richard G. Scott was indeed an inspired teacher, a leader, and lifter of people. His amazing mind and compassionate soul enabled him to help engineer a path for all of us to return home.

Mr. FLAKE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. LEE. I yield to the Senator.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I just wish to second what has been said about Elder Scott and appreciate the Senator from Arizona—or Utah, taking the time to say it.

One of my fondest memories of being in Congress was at one point showing Elder Scott around a bit of the Capitol. He knew it well. He had been here before, but it was my privilege and honor to be with him at that time. It has been my privilege and honor over many years to hear him at general conference and other venues exhorting people to follow the example of Christ and to love their families, love their wives. To see him pass now after such dedicated service for so long, it is truly wonderful for him to be reunited with his wife and for his family to reflect on a life of service.

I thank the Senator for his comments and wished to add my own.

I yield back.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I thank my distinguished colleague from Arizona for his kind remarks regarding Elder Scott. I would also remark, just briefly, that my late father, himself an Arizonan, would be pleased to hear me referred to as a Senator from Arizona, given that I was born there.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I think many of us today have been struck with a serious case of deja vu because once again, with a government shutdown looming, some Republicans continue to pander to their base with a political show vote instead of working with Democrats to prevent a budget crisis. Once again, it is women's health that is being used as a tea party political football, with Republicans attempting to cut off women's access to care, and once again workers and families across our country are watching Congress and wondering whether their elected officials can do the absolute bare minimum.

The government shutdown that Republicans pushed us into in 2013 did nothing to help them repeal the Affordable Care Act, but it did have real consequences for families and communities we represent. Workers didn't know when they would get their next paycheck. Businesses felt the sting of fewer customers. Families across the country lost even more trust that elected officials in Washington, DC, could get anything done.

In my home State of Washington, thousands of employees at Joint Base Lewis-McChord were sent home with no return in sight. Startups couldn't get small business loans, national parks such as Mount Rainier shut down. It kept families away from true national treasures and customers away from small businesses that rely on their tourism.

After all of that, I had hoped Republicans would learn their lesson, especially because once that economy-rattling exercise in futility came to an end, I was proud to work with the Republican budget chairman, PAUL RYAN, to do what we shouldn't have needed a shutdown to get done—negotiate a 2-year bipartisan deal that prevented another government shutdown. It restored critical investments in priorities such as education, research, and defense jobs and showed our families that government can get something done when both sides are willing to come to the table and compromise.

That deal was an important reminder that governing by crisis simply does not work. Unfortunately, now it seems that some of my Republican colleagues have forgotten that, because instead of working across the aisle on another bipartisan budget deal, as Democrats have pushed them to do for months, some Republicans are once again using a looming fiscal deadline as an opportunity to pander to their base, no matter what that means for our workers and families who are wondering whether government will still be running in a few days.

Since they clearly need another reminder, attacking women's health does not keep the government open and these shutdown threats will not work. It didn't work in 2011, when House Republicans tried to defund Planned Parenthood in the budget at the very last minute. It didn't work in 2013, when extreme Members of the GOP were dead set on repealing ObamaCare, and they will not work today.

I am going to be proud to vote against this partisan attempt to defund Planned Parenthood and take critical health care services away from millions of people.

Then I hope that finally Republicans will remember what they should have learned last Congress: accept that enough is enough and make sure that women, workers, families, and our economy are protected from a completely unnecessary crisis.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. 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. Mr. President, since February I have been coming to the Senate floor every week to talk about the waste of the week.

Back in 2010, when I made the decision to answer a call to run for the Senate again, one of the primary reasons for my decision to go forward was my alarm over the plunge into debt and rising deficit that was taking place. At the time, the national debt of this country was a little over $10 trillion. It is alarming to note that as I stand here 5 years later, our debt has nearly doubled. It's over $18 trillion in just the 5 years I have been here.

There were alarm bells ringing in 2010, and those alarm bells were saying that we cannot stay on this course, that it is going to come back to haunt us someday, that it will affect our economy, that it will affect our credit rating. Someday the bill collector will be at the door of the taxpayer saying: You have to pay up big time or we are going to go into default.

What took place going forward from that was a series of efforts—some of them very equally bipartisan by both Republicans and Democrats who were alarmed at where we were and wishing to come together to persuade the President to work with us and put us on a path toward fiscal responsibility. That work involved any number of proposals and iterations. We all remember the so-called Gang of 6, the Committee of 12, the Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction, and various others who had plans. It was the dominating issue of our time during the first couple of years of my return here in 2011 and 2012.

After the election of 2012, when the President was reelected, at his own initiative he reached out to a few Republicans—I was one of them—and said: I am willing to sit down and work together to deal with this. This is a

major issue affecting the future of our country, affecting our economy.

I was encouraged that after the election and when no longer seeking any further office, the President would be willing to seriously work with us. We did serious work for several months. The President's top three appointees—the head of the Office of Management and Budget, his Chief of Staff, and his political director—met with eight of us on a regular basis, both here in the Capitol and at the White House. We had agreed we would not have any public meetings. We would not have staff. It would just be Members and the President's designated individuals. We did not broadcast what we were doing because we knew it would become public and then political and therefore perhaps end up with the same fate all the other efforts had resulted in.

We got to the end of that, and in the end, even though we made an extraordinary number of concessions to the President, even though we essentially had put together a package of items he himself had suggested in his budget plans that we could accomplish in slowing down the growth of government, the spending, and the deficits every year that were rolling out and plunging us into debt, we came up short.

At that point, it became very clear to me that we were not going to be able to achieve a long-term plan for putting us on the road to good fiscal health. So I thought: OK, I am hearing from a lot of colleagues here in the Senate but also from other outside sources saying that under sequester we just can't cut any more. We need more revenue to expand necessary spending projects in government. And while some essential functions that only government can do might need that type of attention, there is a range of things that you really have to question why they are on the books in the first place.

A number of my colleagues—particularly former Senator Coburn—took this floor often—as I did, as well as others—to point out areas where not the Republican Party had decided, where not individuals representing our party had decided, but where nonpartisan agencies of the government—the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office, the Office of Management and Budget at the White House—had investigated and produced examples of spending that were either waste, fraud, or abuse, and had no legitimate qualification to stay on the books.

So we started looking into this. Thanks to Senator Coburn and others, we have come up with a number of things we could easily take off the books, easily use to pay for essential things, easily use to reduce our deficit spending, keep from going into debt, return money to the taxpayers, or however we wanted to do it. So we started to accumulate that, and our goal was to reach $100 billion to simply defy the myth going around that there is not a penny we can cut and that we have done all we can do.

So over the 20-some times I have been on this floor, we have come up with a number of issues which could save the taxpayer money and certainly need to be addressed. Our current total is now well over $100 billion, and today we are adding $10.5 billion to our $100 billion total. We are now at $116 billion. I said we would stop at $100 billion, but the examples keep rolling in, and so we are going to keep going every week. As long as this cycle of the Senate is in session, I will come to the floor and label yet another example of waste.

Last month, when I was home in Indiana, coming down from northwest Indiana to our capital city of Indianapolis on Interstate 65 for the umpteenth time—as I drive from north to south or south to north on that road, I pass through wind farms of literally thousands of windmills. Interestingly enough, and as I observed even this time, many of them are not turning. There are windmills—a few of them turning—driven by the wind, but most of them are not turning. We have thousands of these, and it looks as if fewer than 100 or a comparable number are operating, and so I am wondering why and whether the taxpayer is getting a good deal on this.

I want to give a little bit of history of how all this came to be put in place. Back in the early 1990s—in fact, in 1992—the Congress passed the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which included the renewable electricity production tax credit, called the PTC. The point was that as we looked at alternative ways to produce electricity to reduce our dependence on oil and fossil fuels, there was a tax credit created for those using windmills to create power. It was designed to be claimed if the wind farm was actually making the power.

Earlier I said that many times I have come down that road and I have seen windmills that were idle. But the blades had to be turning and the electricity had to be being produced in order to receive that tax credit.

At the time, because I thought we were overly dependent on Middle Eastern oil and that it was creating issues for us geopolitically and militarily and otherwise, I thought it would be good to have a stimulus here to support the creation of wind energy, to give us the ability to stand on our own and have less dependence on Middle Eastern oil. The main reason I supported it is because it was to start the process and incentivize diverse energy sources to get them off the ground. It was going to be a short-term boost to help these new energy sources become competitive.

The original credit was designed under the law to last only 5½ years and then there would no longer be this credit. Well, like any other credit, subsidy, or anything else passed here which provides taxpayer support for production of something, it never expires. Few if any of them expire on the expiration date. So once again, once you get a law on the books, once you get a credit on the books, once you get a subsidy on the books, you can't get it off.

Since the time the original bill passed, the wind industry and its supporters have repeatedly come to Congress and said: Just give us a few more years and then wind will be competitive, without taxpayer subsidies.

As a result, this 5½-year program, which started in 1992, has been extended multiple times. In 2013, nearly two decades after the time the subsidies expired, Congress changed the rules so the facilities only have to begin construction before the expiration date to automatically qualify for a future 10-year subsidy, even before those windmills become operational. So if someone is just in the business of building windmills, as some of our major companies are, they are going to qualify for the subsidy. They are going to get the tax credit—whether or not the windmills are needed. They can just pour some concrete and start the building process, and they are going to qualify for the credit. The result is that more and more wind facilities are being constructed irrespective of the needs of the electricity grid or market demand.

Just last year, Warren Buffett, who is a smart investor, noted that wind isn't profitable without subsidies. He said:

> For example, on wind energy, we get a tax credit if we build a lot of wind farms. That's the only reason to build them. They don't make sense without the tax credit.

So regardless of the demand, regardless of whether or not those windmills need to be turning and generating electricity, regardless of whether or not that electricity can be put into the grid—and, by the way, the cost of wind energy is three to four times the cost of fossil fuel energy—regardless of any of that, the tax credit is there.

In 2014 Congress retroactively extended the wind tax credit at the end of the year, and the general assumption here in Congress is that the production tax credit will once again be extended at the end of this year. That is probably going to happen.

According to an estimate from the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, if we continue and extend this tax credit, this will add another $10.5 billion to our budget.

Clearly, it is way past time to end this seemingly never-ending subsidy. It is time to give the hardworking taxpayers savings, and it is time to stop wasteful spending. If we can prevent Congress from just automatically extending this way beyond the original 5½ years, decades beyond, we can save the taxpayers $10.5 billion.

So today I am adding to this chart and picture here $10.5 billion, which now totals $116 billion-plus in terms of money that falls under the category of waste, fraud, and abuse. My colleagues cannot come down to this floor and say we can't cut a penny more of any program and defend the numerous—now

well more than 20—examples of what have been defined as waste, fraud, and abuse—not by me, not by the Republican Party, but by nonpartisan agencies of the Federal Government.

There it is. Stay tuned for next week's ''Waste of the Week.''

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, it is time give it our best to move America forward and give Americans a fair shot. Let's show the American people that we can work across the aisle and across the dome to get the job done.

Instead, here we are facing another shutdown showdown. There is no reason for there to be a government shutdown. Republican leadership does not want a shutdown. Democrats don't want a shutdown. There may be some drama, but we intend to keep the government open and avoid shutdown, slamdown politics.

I hoped the Senate had learned its lesson in October 2013, when Republicans shut down government over the Affordable Care Act, or this February 2015, when Republicans threatened the Department of Homeland Security with shutdown over immigration policy.

Senate Democrats won't be threatened and bullied into accepting poison pill riders. Serious policy issues like family planning and reproductive health deserve serious debate rather than becoming an ''add on'' rider to a funding bill.

Shutdowns are bad for everyone, jeopardizing family checkbooks, business bottom lines, and the Federal checkbook. A shutdown makes it impossible for Federal agencies to meet missions that serve the American people. A shutdown means furloughed Federal employees and contractors; delayed tax returns; delayed small business loans; and delayed contracts.

Uncertainty slows economic growth and hurts the health and well-being of the entire Nation. When the government was closed for 16 days in 2013, the shutdown hurt our growing economy, sacrificing 120,000 private sector jobs. Billions of dollars of economic output was lost. We lost 6.6 million work days, about 850,000 Federal employees were sent home.

My home State was hit particularly hard. Maryland is home to many Federal agencies. It was not just the Federal workers that got hurt. The Baltimore Sun wrote about Jay Angle, the owner of Salsa Grill, a Peruvian restaurant in Woodlawn outside the Social Security Administration. Every day, 4,700 workers go to work at Social Security, but only 500 were on the job during the shutdown. Salsa Grill counts on the Social Security workers as customers, but they were not there. There were stories like Jay's all over the country.

Because of the 2013 shutdown, hundreds of patients could not enroll in clinical trials at the National Institutes of Health, NIH, so their last chance for a miracle was delayed or denied. About 8,000 rural families had their home loan decisions delayed, pushing the American Dream down the road. Head Start grantees in seven States closed, leaving 7,200 children at home and families searching for high quality child care.

Avoiding a shutdown is just the first step. We also need a new budget deal to cancel sequester.

Right now our budget caps spending, but it does not cap tax breaks for billionaires and corporations that send jobs overseas. Americans are angry. They feel the rules are rigged against them and that those who write the rules don't care. But Democrats do care. We believe the people deserve a government on their side.

That is why we are fighting to make sure the American people have a government that works as hard as they do.

We have three steps to meet that goal. First, no government shutdown. We need to pass a clean, short-term continuing funding resolution with no poison pill riders to keep the government funded and open for business for as short a time as possible. After all, a yearlong CR just locks in sequester.

The CR will give us time to take the second step, negotiating a new budget agreement that cancels sequester and lifts the spending caps equally for defense and nondefense spending so we can protect our national security and give the American people a fair shot.

After the new budget agreement is reached, we will take the third step, writing and enacting an Omnibus spending bill. Remember, the Appropriations Committee needs 30 days to get the job done once we have our topline.

That is my plan to cancel sequester and put the American people first.

Why do we want to cancel sequester? Sequester requires draconian cuts to critical programs that will have consequences for American families for a generation. Sequester was supposed to be so arbitrary and unthinkable that it would drive Congress to a budget deal. But gridlock, hammerlock, and deadlock kept that from happening.

It was the reality of sequester that led Congress to negotiate the Murray-Ryan budget deal that provided sequester relief for 2014 and 2015.

Now we have got deja vu. We need a new agreement to cancel sequester-level spending in fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

The Republican budget for fiscal year 2016 calls for spending at the sequester level of $1.017 trillion. The President's budget request asks for $74 billion more. That may sound like a big number, but it is hardly expensive. It is equal to the 2010 level—6 years ago.

We must cancel sequester to give Americans a fair shot by investing in our country and our people.

Sequester hurts national security. According to Army Chief of Staff General Raymond Odierno, only 33 percent of our brigades are ready to fight. Without sequester relief, the Army will not be truly ready to fight until 2025.

Sequester keeps us from building and maintaining our physical infrastructure. Funding to build roads, bridges, and transit creates jobs while easing peoples commutes to their jobs.

Sequester deepens our innovation deficit. Funding for basic research is an investment in jobs today and jobs tomorrow. New ideas and discoveries lead to startups that rev up our economy and find new cures for deadly diseases.

Under spartan budgets, NIH funding has not kept up with inflation. Even the increases proposed under the Republican spending caps fund NIH by cutting education, college affordability, and labor protections. On the other hand, when we cancel sequester, we will invest in innovation and discovery without sacrificing other investments in our future. For example, the National Science Foundation would give 600 more grants supporting 7,500 scientists, students, teachers, and technicians.

Cancelling sequester means meeting compelling human needs. We can help make college affordable for families. Right now, under sequester-level budgeting, Republicans instead took $300 million from Pell grants and eliminated First in the World grants to make college more affordable.

Under sequester-level appropriations bills, we can not keep our promises to our veterans. Both the Senate and the House Republican bills underfund medical care at the Veterans Administration—by more than $600 million in the Senate. That is enough money to provide medical coverage for 61,000 veterans. The House also cuts $580 million for building VA health care facilities when there is a $10 billion maintenance backlog.

It is clear that we need to end sequester. It is also clear that the shutdown was a disaster for everyone, not to be repeated. Because without the resources to keep our government open, agencies can not serve the American people keeping us safe, healthy, educated, moving, and thriving.

The bottom line is we need a new topline. We need a new budget deal to invest in America's safety and future. We need a short-term CR, free of poison pill riders, to get there—not another shutdown.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise once again to speak against this callous, misguided effort to defund Planned Parenthood. This is a clear case of politics being put ahead of the country's best interests. This time the majority has tied this effort to the funding of the entire Federal Government—they are willing to shut down the government over this issue. That is preposterous.

Planned Parenthood serves some of the most vulnerable women in our society. It cares for 2.7 million patients in the U.S.—5 million patients worldwide. Ninety-seven percent of the services its 700 clinics provide are basic health care, including breast exams, cervical cancer screenings, testing for sexually

transmitted diseases, and contraception. One in five women will use Planned Parenthood as their primary health care provider at some point in their lives.

Nationwide, 80 percent of Planned Parenthood patients make less than $18,000 per year.

Planned Parenthood is often the only health care option for low-income women and women in rural communities. And yet here we are, facing another effort by Republicans to block funding for this vital health care provider, an effort echoed and supported by Republicans who are running for President.

Since this latest attack on Planned Parenthood began in July, I've received more than 25,000 calls and emails from women and men in California who support Planned Parenthood. While the details of the stories vary, they share the same theme: Planned Parenthood was there for them at a critical time in their lives. It was the only place they could go for health care when they were in college, earning minimum wage, or struggling to provide for their children and families. It was the only place where they felt safe and respected. It provided essential tests and screenings and allowed them to plan their families, which is critical to women's economic security over the course of their lives.

Here is one example from a constituent in San Francisco.

She said ''Thirty-two years ago, I was broke, and Planned Parenthood was the only place that would give me birth control. I am now retired, and my life would be so different if they hadn't been there. This is so necessary for those who can't afford it.''

Another constituent from Alameda said, ''I'm calling your office for the first time because I want you to support Planned Parenthood. When I was a young woman, their medical services saved my life. I hope this phone call helps save them in return.''

To me, that is why this organization is so important to women in this country. Not only does it provide health care, it gives women the ability to make a better future for themselves and their families.

I also want to address the false claim put forward by those who are pushing to defund Planned Parenthood: They claim that Planned Parenthood patients would easily find another community clinic to go to for their health care. This is just not true.

Community health centers and clinics do great work, but if 2.7 million Planned Parenthood patients were suddenly without a doctor, they simply could not handle the sudden influx of new patients. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that up to 650,000 Planned Parenthood patients would lose their access to health care. What's more, many community clinics don't provide the level of contraception care and other health care services provided by Planned Parenthood. In two-thirds of the counties where Planned Parenthood has a clinic, it serves half of the women eligible to receive family planning services under the Title X program.

In California, 13 of 58 counties would not have a single clinic to provide family planning services under the Title X program without Planned Parenthood. That tells us what will happen if this funding is stripped—huge numbers of women across the country will have no place to go for vital health services. This isn't a matter of speculation. We've seen what happens when Planned Parenthood is defunded because it has happened at the state level. In 2012, Texas defunded Planned Parenthood. To serve all the women who needed access to a doctor or nurse, the remaining community clinics would have had to increase the number of patients they saw by an average of 81 percent. In other words, they would have needed to accept almost a doubling of their existing number of patients. Unsurprisingly, those clinics lacked the ability to do so. As a result, nearly 20,000 fewer women were served by the Texas Women's Health Program the following year, a 10 percent decline. The number of prescriptions for birth control was cut in half, meaning 100,000 fewer women were able to access affordable birth control.

Louisiana is another State trying to defund Planned Parenthood, and recently defended its actions in court. As part of its rationale, the State actually claimed that dentists and eye doctors are capable of providing women's health care services. Let me repeat: Louisiana officials claimed that women who receive breast exams, contraceptive counseling and prescriptions, and other medical services at Planned Parenthood could go to dentists and eye doctors instead. Any woman knows that is just unrealistic. So make no mistake about it: If Planned Parenthood is defunded, many American women simply will not get the health care they need.

The attacks on women's health don't stop at Planned Parenthood's door. The House of Representatives recently proposed completely eliminating the Title X program, which provides affordable family planning services to low-income women. Title X is proven to reduce abortions by preventing unplanned pregnancies. Let me repeat that: The House has proposed to eliminate a program that reduces abortions. Of course, we also know that the House voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act more than 50 times. Here in the Senate we've suffered through at least 30 similar votes. This law they want to repeal guarantees women basic preventive care like mammograms and cervical cancer screenings. It requires that prenatal care and labor and delivery are covered by insurance companies. It prevents women from being denied coverage or charged more because they're women. It's the greatest achievement for women's health in a generation; yet we wasted days and weeks on futile attempts to eliminate it.

These attempts to deny women and their families access to basic health care, to defund Planned Parenthood, to eliminate funding for family planning services that reduce abortions, and to deny women the right to make their own reproductive decisions are appalling. Planned Parenthood has been under constant attack since its founding in 1916. Its founder, Margaret Sanger, was thrown in jail for providing birth control to women. The proponents of defunding Planned Parenthood have been engaged in this assault for years. The group behind this latest effort, the Center for Medical Progress, has long-standing ties to the anti-choice movement. It is currently under investigation for possible criminal activity. The individuals who obtained the footage used false identification to represent a fake medical company. The videos, which are presented to the public as the full, unedited videos, have been analyzed by forensics experts at Fusion GPS. And the truth is, they are not the full, unedited videos. Content is missing, and numerous edits have been made even to the so-called full footage videos. Many members of Congress have requested the full videos. Those requests have gone unanswered. So the point is, this is part of a sustained assault on an essential health care provider for millions of American women.

I also want to reiterate the real-life consequences of the rhetoric that's been directed at Planned Parenthood and its staff. I talked about this when I spoke on this subject in July. I strongly believe that the rhetoric directed at Planned Parenthood sends a message that it is ''OK'' to intimidate its staff and patients. It is not.

A few weeks ago, a Planned Parenthood health center in Washington State was severely damaged when an arsonist lit it on fire. Thankfully, no one was hurt. But I would hope that we'd learn from this event, and opponents of Planned Parenthood would think about the ramifications of their words. This is dangerous territory.

In closing, we must remember that the attacks on Planned Parenthood aren't about improving women's health. They are about taking away women's rights, choices, and access to the doctors and nurses they know and trust. And quite frankly, their efforts will only jeopardize women's health by removing the only source of health care many women have available.

I've seen great gains for women during my lifetime, including more education, greater workplace freedom, and the right to decide what happens to our own bodies. I simply will not stand by and watch our advances slip away. We are standing up for Planned Parenthood because we stand up for women. I urge a ''no'' vote.

Let's defeat this bill and move on so we can fund the government and address many other critical issues.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am in strong opposition to the substitute amendment to H.J. Res. 61 imposing a moratorium on Federal funding for Planned Parenthood clinics and their affiliates unless they stop providing abortions.

Let's be clear about one thing: the effort to defund Planned Parenthood is not about Federal funding for abortions. Since 1977, it has been well established under the Hyde amendment that Federal funding cannot be used for abortions, except in very narrow circumstances where the life of the mother is endangered or in cases of rape or incest.

The impetus for this amendment stems from the recent release of surreptitiously recorded and heavily edited videos that falsely portray Planned Parenthood's participation in legal fetal tissue donation programs and the subsequent attempts to defund Planned Parenthood on the basis of that intrinsically dishonest campaign. It is not the first time anti-choice advocates have deliberately misrepresented Planned Parenthood. I remember when a Senator stood on the floor of the U.S. Senate 4 years ago and claimed that abortions are ''well over 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does''. And then his press spokesperson had to acknowledge that what he said ''wasn't intended as a factual statement''. How much of what we are hearing and seeing now isn't ''intended as a factual statement''? Senators certainly are entitled to their sincerely held positions on abortion and contraception, but I think we ought to refrain from saying things we know aren't true, especially on the floor of the United States Senate.

The attack on Planned Parenthood, if successful, would have a devastating impact on women and families across this country, especially lower income women and their families. Planned Parenthood health centers are an integral part of our safety net health care system, providing high quality, affordable health care services to 2.7 million patients per year. Every year, Planned Parenthood physicians and nurses provide family planning counseling and contraception to 2.1 million women, perform nearly 400,000 screenings for cervical cancer and nearly 500,000 breast exams, and provide nearly 4.5 million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Banning Federal funding for Planned Parenthood would put millions of women at risk of having no place to go for basic, preventive health care. For many women, family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood provide the only basic health care they receive. In fact, 6 in 10 women who access care through a family planning health center consider it their main source of health care. More than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are located in rural areas, health professional shortage areas, or medically underserved areas, putting women living in those areas at particular risk of losing access to health care services. It isn't just Planned Parenthood that is under attack; it is also the one out of every five women in this country who has relied on Planned Parenthood for health care at some point in her lifetime.

Earlier this week, I also voted against invoking cloture on another assault on women's reproductive health—H.R. 36, an unconstitutional attempt to impose a nationwide ban on abortions when the ''postfertilization age'' of the fetus is determined to 20 weeks or greater, with extremely limited exceptions. More than 40 years ago, in its landmark Roe v. Wade decision, the Supreme Court made it clear that women in this country have a constitutional right to abortion services and that no legislature may ban abortion prior to viability, which is exactly what H.R. 36 attempts to do. Previous attempts to impose previability bans on abortion have been repeatedly struck down by the courts, and last year, the Supreme Court refused to review a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision permanently blocking Arizona's 20-week ban. Nevertheless, anti-choice advocates continue their relentless efforts to undermine women's reproductive rights and health in any and every way possible. The cloture votes on H.R. 36 and today's amendment to defund Planned Parenthood are simply the latest attempts.

In addition to imposing an unconstitutional previability ban on abortion, H.R. 36 threatens doctors with criminal penalties, including up to 5 years in prison, for attempting or performing an abortion in violation of the bill's onerous restrictions, which is clearly intended to intimidate and discourage doctors from providing abortion care. The bill also puts the health of pregnant women at risk by allowing an exception to the 20-week ban only in the very narrow circumstance where an abortion is necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman. Therefore, under H.R. 36, a pregnant woman who develops a serious medical condition or complication after 20 weeks would be barred from terminating her pregnancy, no matter how serious the risk to her health, unless the abortion is deemed necessary to prevent the woman's death. In addition, H.R. 36 would not allow an exception in the heart-wrenching situation in which a severe fetal anomaly is discovered late in a woman's pregnancy, despite the fact that these conditions are often only detectable around 20 weeks.

H.R. 36 also lacks a reasonable exception to the 20-week ban for victims of rape and incest. Adult women who have been raped would be required to report the assault to law enforcement or undergo compulsory medical treatment or counseling at least 48 hours prior to receiving an abortion, meaning that the rape survivor must have at least two appointments with two different providers in order to access the care she needs. H.R. 36's treatment of minors who have survived rape or incest is even more extreme. For minors who have been the victim of rape or incest, H.R. 36 would require proof that the crime was reported to law enforcement or the appropriate government agency in order to qualify for an exception to the 20-week ban.

These extremely narrow exceptions completely ignore the fact that the majority of sexual assault survivors do not or are not able to report their assaults to law enforcement for a variety of compelling reasons. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—CDC—estimate that only 35 percent of sexual assaults or rapes were reported to the police in 2010. It is simply unconscionable to subject survivors of rape and incest to these burdensome and unnecessary requirements in order to receive the care they need.

We are 6 days away from a government shutdown; yet we have spent most of this week on misguided attempts to ban legal abortions and defund Planned Parenthood—and to link the Planned Parenthood issue to whether the Federal Government will remain open for business—even as it has been obvious to everyone that such attempts would fail. A government shutdown is a completely avoidable crisis, and using floor time this time to attack women's health care and reproductive rights instead of negotiating a bipartisan plan to fund the government is both unacceptable and irresponsible. The American people deserve better. They deserve a budget that supports a strong national defense and growing economy, not the threat of another government shutdown. I urge my colleagues to join with me in opposing these latest attacks on women's reproductive rights and access to high quality, comprehensive health care services.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know I speak for the entire Senate when I say it was a privilege to welcome the Pope to the Capitol this morning. For the thousands who gathered on the Capitol lawn, it was an experience they are unlikely to ever forget.

A quiet nod, a soft smile, a simple wave—the gestures may have been small, but their meaning ran deep, captured forever in the hearts of the faithful and the hopeful.

As we turn back to the work of governing, many will interpret his words in many ways. The media certainly has. But we can also hear him as simply expressing his faith. And we all appreciate his closing remarks: God bless America.

Mr. President, it is no surprise that Members of the Senate have differences on issues. That is normal, healthy even. But even if our Democratic colleagues may not agree with us on every

issue, let us agree that the scandal surrounding Planned Parenthood is deeply, deeply unsettling. Let us agree that it makes sense to at least place a scandal-plagued political organization on leave without pay and then use that money to fund women's health care as Congress investigates these serious allegations.

Let us also agree that it is time for our Democratic colleagues to finally allow the Senate to fund the government, just as we have worked hard to do all year long.

Here is the view the new Senate took from the beginning. The best way to fund the government is to pass a budget, and then to fund it. That may be a different approach from previous years, but it is the approach we chose to pursue when we came to office.

We didn't think it was right that the Senate hadn't passed a budget in 6 years or that the Senate's Appropriations Committee hadn't passed the 12 bills necessary to fund the government in 6 years. So we changed that.

The appropriations process got off to a great start. There was often a spirit of bipartisanship inside that committee. Consider that nearly all of the 12 funding bills passed with bipartisan support. More than half attracted the support of over 70 percent of Democrats. We saw our Democratic colleagues use phrases such as ''win-win-win'' or declare the appropriations legislation would ''do right by'' their particular State as they issued press releases praising the bills that they voted for.

It was great to see that bipartisan action. I was hopeful that our Democratic colleagues would actually join with us on the Senate floor to debate and pass the legislation they had praised in committee. But no, they took a different path.

I regret that Democratic leadership determined a crisis would be necessary to advance a policy aim of growing the government, and that our colleagues decided accordingly to block every single funding bill—every single one—almost all of which had been supported by a significant number of Democrats in committee. So we have been forced to pursue a continuing resolution as a result.

It would be much better to simply finish the appropriations process we worked so hard to advance. But if our colleagues continue to block the Senate from doing so, the Senate is left with very few options. It may be regrettable, but that is the reality we now face.

The bill before us would help get things back on track. It would ensure the government remains funded and open. It would adhere to the bipartisan spending level already agreed to by both parties. It would also allow our Democratic colleagues to join us in standing up for women's health instead of a political organization mired in scandal. For 1 year, the legislation would redirect $235 million in Planned Parenthood funding to women's health instead, strengthening health centers that provide critically needed community care.

I wish our colleagues hadn't pursued a strategy of blocking government funding. That strategy may have succeeded in bringing the country to this point, but there is no reason to continue blocking every attempt to fund the government or to protect political allies mired in scandal.

So I am calling on colleagues across the aisle to join us in standing against a shutdown. I am calling on them to join us in standing up for women's health instead.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time following the vote until 6 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, that all time during quorum calls until 6 p.m. be charged equally between both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all time be yielded back and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on amendment No. 2669.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on Senate amendment No. 2669 to H.J. Res. 61.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Marco Rubio, Tom Cotton, Orrin G. Hatch, Joni Ernst, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham, David Vitter, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, Bill Cassidy, David Perdue, John Boozman, James Lankford, Thad Cochran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on amendment No. 2669, offered by the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. MCCONNELL, to H.J. Res. 61, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 47, nays 52, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 270 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Flake	Portman
Blunt	Gardner	Risch
Boozman	Graham	Roberts
Burr	Grassley	Rounds
Capito	Hatch	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McCain	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—52

Ayotte	Heinrich	Paul
Baldwin	Heitkamp	Peters
Bennet	Heller	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Sasse
Cantwell	Kirk	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Collins	McCaskill	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Cotton	Merkley	Warner
Donnelly	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	

NOT VOTING—1

Boxer

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 52.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

VOTE ON MOTION TO COMMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table the motion to commit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2672.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 2672.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2669.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 2669.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2680

(Purpose: Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a substitute amendment at the desk that I ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL], for Mr. COCHRAN, proposes an amendment numbered 2680.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2681 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2680.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk that I ask the clerk to report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2681 to amendment No. 2680.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 1 day after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second.

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2682 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2681

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2682 to amendment No. 2681.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''

AMENDMENT NO. 2683

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have an amendment to the text proposed to be stricken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposed an amendment numbered 2683 to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2680.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 4 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2684 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2683

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2684 to amendment No. 2683.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''4'' and insert ''5''

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2685.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a motion to commit with instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to commit the joint resolution to the Committee on Appropriations with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 2685.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end add the following.

''This Act shall take effect 6 days after the date of enactment.''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2686

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2686 to the instructions of the motion to commit.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be disposed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''6'' and insert ''7''

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2687 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2686

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 2687 to amendment No. 2686.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike ''7'' and insert ''8''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 6 p.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The majority whip is recognized.

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today has certainly been a historic day in Washington, DC. With the arrival of His Holiness Pope Francis this week, Washington has been flooded with the faithful who were eager to mark his first visit to the United States. I know my colleagues and I are grateful we were able to host him at a joint meeting of Congress, and we were all in awe of his incredible stamina given his schedule—something we are not unfamiliar with.

As head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis leads a diverse community of believers. Catholics in the United States make up about one-fifth of the population in the United States and also in my home State of Texas. In fact, Catholic priests from Spain were some of our earliest settlers in Texas, and one of the dozens of missions established by the Catholic Church early in the 18th century in Texas was Mission San Antonio de Valero, what would later be called the Alamo.

It was a privilege to welcome Pope Francis this morning and to hear his remarks. I am told he was the first pontiff ever to address a joint meeting of Congress.

CARDINAL DANIEL DINARDO

It was also my honor to host a friend of mine, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, who accepted my invitation to join me today to hear Pope Francis. Cardinal DiNardo is the archbishop of Galveston-Houston, home to more than 1 million Catholics—the largest number of the 15 dioceses in Texas. I have had the honor of knowing Cardinal DiNardo for a number of years, and I am grateful to him for his unwavering commitment to life and for his extreme compassion in both a pastoral and spiritual sense as well as a practical one. We saw that in action recently when historic flooding devastated many of the communities in the Houston area. During that time, Cardinal DiNardo was quick to ensure that Catholic Charities would provide some relief to those in need. There is no doubt that his leadership will continue to serve not only the Catholic community in the Galveston-Houston area well but also all of us in Texas.

Mr. President, on another matter, earlier today Democrats blocked a measure that would fund the U.S. Government but redirect Federal money that currently goes to Planned Parenthood to go for women's health care at community health centers. Actually, there are many more community

health centers in Texas than there are Planned Parenthood facilities.

Earlier this week I outlined how the Democrats, while earlier calling for regular order in this Chamber, have delivered on their promise to block legislation from moving forward that would fund vital parts of our government, such as the men and women in uniform who defend us. This is in spite of the fact that earlier this year, as I believe the majority leader mentioned, members of the Appropriations Committee actually did the work we were elected to do. We passed a budget and then in a bipartisan way passed appropriations bills out of the Appropriations Committee. But because they have chosen to filibuster all of these appropriations bills, we find ourselves with unneeded and unnecessary drama when it comes to funding the Federal Government—hence the vote on Monday for closing off debate on a continuing resolution to fund the government through December 11, 2015. Unfortunately, even our uniformed military has been taken hostage to this strategy, which has created unnecessary drama, as I said, and created some real hardship. So as we approach the looming fiscal deadline of next Wednesday at midnight, it is important to remember how we got here.

While Democrats filibustered legislation that would have removed all Federal funding for Planned Parenthood, this fight—the fight for the sanctity of life Pope Francis talked about this morning—is far from over. We are going to continue the four different investigations of Planned Parenthood's practices and pursue legislation that would protect the fundamental right to life of the unborn. Protecting the sanctity of life is an ongoing mission, and it does not end with this one vote.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President here we are again: with just 6 days until the Federal Government has to close its doors, we find ourselves faced with another manufactured crisis. Two years ago, it was defunding the Affordable Care Act. Congress has voted nearly 60 times on that so far, all of which failed. In the meantime, more than 17 million Americans who had no health insurance have obtained health insurance.

Four years ago, it was the same issue Republicans are pushing today: defunding an organization that provides health care to millions of women across this country. With the vote to defund Planned Parenthood now behind us—for the second time in as many months—it is time to move forward to pass a clean, short-term continuing resolution and get to work addressing the real challenge before us: ending sequestration.

We've said it before, and it bears repeating: sequestration was never supposed to become the status quo. Its cuts are so extreme and so draconian that imposing it will hurt programs across the board, impacting every American. Sequestration neglects police and fire departments, national parks, highways and bridges, airports, public health and education; and abandons promises made to our veterans and men and women in uniform. Allowing sequester-level spending bills to become law for the next fiscal year, which the President has rightly said he will not do, would be an abdication of our sworn responsibilities as Members of Congress.

We must pass a clean, continuing resolution; we must negotiate a new deal to end sequestration, and we must pass appropriations bills that reflect the urgent needs of our country, not a political score card.

Last weekend, my wife, Marcelle, and I were fortunate to join hundreds of Vermont women at the 19th Annual Women's Economic Opportunity Conference in Randolph, VT. I have sponsored this conference each year in an effort to help Vermont women of all ages and generations take advantage of the economic opportunities available to them.

From emerging entrepreneurs or those transitioning their careers, thousands of participants have been drawn to the conference over its nearly two decade history. Sequestration puts at risk the ability of small businesses to access loans and counseling from the Federal Government, which helps spur and strengthen our economy. Sequestration will cut critical workforce investment programs that help young workers, dislocated workers, and veterans find permanent employment. Sequestration reverses the progress we have made in recent years to restore our economy and create jobs.

The economic harm of sequestration is, of course, not all that is at stake. As Senators in both parties have pointed out, sequestration hurts our national security and the readiness of our Armed Forces. Sequestration hurts our roads, our infrastructure, and our public transit systems and will deeply impact our affordable housing supply. Sequestration makes maintaining our commitment to our veterans, including a generation of disabled veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, nearly impossible. What's more, to meet the requirements of sequestration, we are poised to rob from such vital needs as job training programs and preschool development grants.

The bottom line is this: sequestration was never intended to happen. But relying on budget gimmicks, as the Senate's defense spending bill does, while nearly zeroing out critical programs for low-income Americans, as the Senate's transportation and housing bill does, creates more problems. Republican leaders have waited too long to come to the table to negotiate relief from sequester-level spending caps.

By passing this clean, short-term continuing resolution, we can get to work now—immediately—to negotiate a new deal that builds on the 2013 Murray-Ryan deal and keep the doors of our government open.

We have now had the pointless debate over defunding Planned Parenthood. Let's move on. Let's not manufacture another crisis that puts millions of jobs on the line and hurts Americans in every state of this country. We were elected to represent our constituents. The voice from Vermonters is clear: it is time to get our work done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. 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. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in support of a clean, short-term continuing resolution—or, as we say, a CR—to temporarily fund the government without controversial policy riders. After the vote we just had, I hope we can move to such a measure. Even some Republican leaders have acknowledged that this previous vote was a show vote designed to appease, but to fail. It is part of a troubling pattern that has been emerging over many months of avoiding meaningful, bipartisan talks to fix the budget and waiting until the last moment to deal with issues everyone knows must be addressed.

We have an obligation to the American people to keep their government working. It is one of the most basic responsibilities we have as Members of Congress. A clean CR at this juncture fulfills this obligation, keeping the government open for a few more weeks while we work on a plan to eliminate the sequester-level budget caps for defense and nondefense programs. I wish we could have begun work on an overall agreement earlier in the year, as Vice Chairwoman MIKULSKI and others strongly urged months ago, but at this late hour we should pass this short-term measure and move on to serious negotiations on budget caps for this year and beyond.

Shutting the government down now will not serve any useful purpose. What a shutdown will do is waste taxpayers' money and hurt the economy. Indeed, the 2-week Republican government shutdown in 2013 cost our economy billions of dollars. Based on that experience, here is some of what we can expect if there is another forced government shutdown this year:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development will have to furlough more than 95 percent of its workforce, impacting services to more than 60 field and regional offices nationwide. Payments will be delayed to the roughly 3,000 local public housing authorities that manage the country's publicly assisted housing programs. In fact, this shifts the burden onto them, causing them to turn to local municipalities that are equally stressed in terms of their budgets. So there is no avoiding

this pain—in fact, it will be multiplied if we shut down the government.

Thousands of home sales and mortgage-refinancing packages backed by the Federal Housing Administration, the FHA, will be put on standby. People who are ready to close, people who are ready to make a commitment to a home, people who are ready to keep this economy moving will be told: Stand back; wait and see.

Cities, counties, and States will not be able to move forward with new community development block grant projects, preventing important local economic investment. This is a program which affects every community in this country, and it is something which is a very positive, constructive way to give local leaders the resources to fund the local initiatives the community desperately wants and needs. This is not Big Washington; this is local America getting a chance to see their projects put in place.

The Federal Aviation Administration will not be able to certify new aircraft, interrupting billions of dollars in sales.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration will be forced to stop investigations and emergency response training.

Classrooms will be shuttered for 700 midshipmen at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. These are young men and women who are committing themselves to serve the Nation either directly in the armed services of the United States or as members of our merchant fleet. They will basically be told to go home.

Financial support will stop for the Maritime Security Program, the MSP. This is an important public-private partnership that is critical to sustaining our troops serving overseas.

These are just a few examples from two of the Departments under my purview as the ranking member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee. There are many other examples throughout the Federal Government that my colleagues are talking about today.

Knowing the results that shutdowns and these hardball tactics have brought before, it is hard to believe some still are willing to resort to budget brinksmanship again.

I know many of my colleagues on the other side share my concern. I particularly wish to commend Senator COLLINS, who has been an excellent leader in chairing the THUD subcommittee, for her support for a clean CR. She has done extraordinary work under very difficult and challenging circumstances. Her support for a clean CR so that we can negotiate a longer term budget solution is indicative of the kind of forthright, thoughtful, and in some cases very courageous service she has rendered to Maine and to the country.

While we focus on the immediate showdown threat, let's remember the bigger threats we face in 2016. We are here because of the Budget Control Act and its attendant sequester-level caps on discretionary spending. Let's remember that these sequester-level caps were never intended to be implemented. At the time BCA was enacted, the cuts were considered to be extreme—in fact, so extreme that Congress would not ever let them happen, that they would embrace defense and nondefense, and that they would be an action-forcing mechanism—not an actuality of law but an action-forcing mechanism to cause us on a bipartisan basis to come up with long-term budget solutions. Unfortunately, that solution did not materialize.

Over time, we had the very good work of Senator MURRAY and Congressman PAUL RYAN to come up with a 2-year suspension, but we are right back where we were, and these sequester caps are staring us right in the face. But today, rather than working together to tackle the sequester, we are on the verge of orchestrating another fiscal crisis. And it is not a crisis that will help the American people; rather, it will hinder the American people. And, indeed, it is ironic because Members on both sides recognize the BCA cap should be raised for both defense and nondefense appropriations.

Indeed, both the Defense authorization and the Defense appropriations bills carry bipartisan sense-of-the-Senate language that says: ''Sequestration relief must be accomplished for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.'' And, ''Sequestration relief should include equal defense and nondefense relief.'' So you have a bipartisan consensus on these two committees that represent a significant number of our colleagues who are essentially saying: We have to end this. And they are saying it because they believe, as I do, that our national security rests not just upon adequate elements of the Department of Defense but adequate investment for all our Federal programs.

So beyond committing a clean, short-term funding bill, we must focus on eliminating these draconian spending caps imposed on us by the BCA. We know these caps will cause real harm to programs across the Federal Government that our States and constituents rely on.

These are not academic issues that could be dismissed as being some programs that are ineffective and less limiting. These are across-the-board cuts that hit all our constituents and hit them hard.

Indeed, months ago Chairman MCCAIN and I together wrote to urge the Committee on the Budget to include a higher baseline funding amount for the Department of Defense in the budget resolution. We were essentially asking them to ignore the BCA caps and produce a budget that realistically recognizes the base needs of the Department of Defense—not the one-time spending of OCO contingency but routine spending that would be projected forth.

Senator MCCAIN in particular worked in extraordinarily good faith to try to get such a provision included in the budget resolution, but he did not succeed. And, in response, the use of OCO contingency funds was incorporated to skirt the budget caps. Essentially, what the committee has done—the defense authorization committee—is it has taken the President's budget numbers, but moved money out of the base budget into OCO, beyond the President's request. And what you are doing is creating this OCO funding mechanism—in a sense, a gimmick, really—to cover the real cost—the ongoing cost, the routine continuing cost—of the Department of Defense. That is not good budgeting, and it is not good for Defense either.

Because of this I was unable to support legislation on the floor for the Defense authorization bill that in many other respects—virtually every other respect—was extremely well done and extremely thought out. Again, I commend the chairman for all his efforts and those of my colleagues.

I clearly disagree that using this OCO funding arrangement—gimmick, sleight of hand, whatever you want to call it—is the way to proceed forward. Relying on it essentially preempts defense from the Budget Control Act and leaves everything else under those onerous caps. As I said, that not only does not adequately and realistically fund defense, but it seriously erodes national security because national security is something more than simply what the Department of Defense does. It is the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and it is a myriad of other functions that will not see funding. In fact, they will see their funding begin to shrink dramatically.

If we use this approach this year, with the argument that it is just a bridge to the day we finally get ourselves together, I think we are deluding ourselves. It would be much easier next year to put even more money into OCO, to take programs that are traditionally funded through the base budget of the Department of Defense and say: Well, we just don't have room. Let's put it in OCO. It becomes the gift that keeps on giving, and it will not provide the real resources and the certainty the Department of Defense needs over many years to plan for their operations.

To stick things in 1-year funding is not to tell the Department of Defense: You can be confident that 2 or 3 years from now, when you are developing that new weapons system platform, the money will be there. It may, but again, it may not. We can't give them that insecurity. We have to give them a sense of certainty.

Now, this is a view that is shared not just by myself and some colleagues here on both sides of the aisle but by senior Defense Department officials. They have testified repeatedly before our committee that OCO funding does not provide long-term budget certainty. They need that. And the

troops—the men and women they lead—need that.

In fact, it really just allows DOD to plan for 1 year. And there are very few programs in the Department of Defense that are 1-year programs. A major weapons system is a multiyear development and then there is the production process. The strategy is not year by year. It is over several years at least. So this is not an efficient and effective way to run the organization. Proper budgeting and planning in the Department of Defense requires at least 5 years. That is the standard. The standard measure is a 5-year program forecast, budget forecast, and we are telling them: Well, this year you can have a bonanza of OCO funds. Next year could be more, could be less, could be much less.

This is not the way to efficiently allocate resources for national security and to efficiently develop a strategy to counteract an increasing array of threats around the globe in many different dimensions in many different regions. If we go down this path, it will lead to instability for our troops, their families, and for our defense industrial base. They deserve certainty, not a year-to-year, perhaps-maybe, maybe-perhaps approach.

We also need to recognize, as I have repeated before, that national security is not just the Department of Defense. Other agencies are critical—the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and Department of Treasury, which does all the terrorist financing sanctions. They have to trace funds flowing around the world to ensure they do not aid and assist terrorist activities or other maligning activities. They need resources too.

Taking this approach as it stands now, using this OCO approach for defense and then letting everything else stay under BCA, will not give these agencies the resources they need.

I was struck a few days ago when General Petraeus was here testifying that one of the critical areas of effort against ISIL is information warfare. They have proven to be extraordinarily adept at using social media, at communicating through the Internet. One of the questions from my colleague—which was very thoughtful and fundamental—was this: Is the State Department doing enough to counteract—as one of our major foreign policy organizations—this information campaign by ISIL? The General sort of chuckled a bit, and then he said: Let me tell you that when I was commanding, on active service, the State Department had to come to me and essentially borrow $1 million from CENTCOM funds so they could get in the ball game—to just get in the game in terms of information warfare: counteracting measures, public campaigns of information in countries throughout the globe, particularly in the Middle East.

That will be much worse if we proceed down this path, and we will not be enhancing our national security. If the ISIL message is unanswered, if they are able to attract adherents from around the globe because all they can really hear is this grotesque discussion of ISIL and what they propose, and there are no counterarguments, there is no countervailing points, we lose that information war. And that is not just a DOD function.

Now, we have to make investments in both defense and nondefense. But as I said before, if we stick with these BCA caps, our non-DOD programs will suffer. In addition to that, the needs of the American people will suffer.

We will not be able to invest in adequate transportation and water infrastructure. We won't be able to do things that provide adequate and decent housing for our citizens. Under the budget caps we will lose jobs too. When the resources diminish, the need for workers diminishes, and that will happen.

Now, we have a situation, particularly where some of our most vulnerable Americans would suffer grievously. Here are a few examples. The elderly housing program has been cut in half since 2010, even when we know the United States population today is aging faster.

Every Member of this Senate has numerous elderly housing programs in their State. Their low-income seniors rely on them. I would suspect they take some pride in the fact there is adequate housing—in some cases not enough, but at least some adequate housing. They will suffer.

There are 7.7 million very low income renters in the United States. That means they pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent or live in substandard housing or both. If these budget caps go into effect, then the THUD bill will not include meaningful funding for the affordable housing production program available to local governments.

When we turn to Public Housing Authorities, they are facing more than $3 billion in capital needs just to keep them repaired, just to make them places that are decent to live in, where people can have appropriate hallway lighting, they can have elevators that work, they can have plumbing systems that are adequate—the basics.

We are not talking about building whirlpools, spas, and Jacuzzis. This is just meeting basic requirements in maintenance and capital repairs. The level of funding PHA's are faced with is the same level we provided in the late 1980s. That is going back about 30 years. Thirty years ago, relatively speaking, we would be spending as much as we are now on simply maintaining public housing. These are real-world consequences.

Again, BCA comes into play in terms of the impact on domestic programs. Funding for public transit continues to fall even while transit ridership goes up.

One of the success stories over the past few years is our public transit systems. Our buses, our subway systems, our light rail systems are enjoying increased ridership. That is good for people to get to work, and it is good for our environment because of reduces the use of individual automobiles. But if our ridership goes up and the resources go down, we are going to see a system that gets less and less dependable, reliable, and effective, and we will lose not only a number of those riders but have incidents—as we have seen across the country—where there are significant safety concerns and significant disruptions.

It has not been uncommon over the last several months here in Washington to hear on the radio that a whole subway line has gone down because of a maintenance problem or something else, and that day's workforce doesn't get to the office for 3 or 4 or 5 hours. Guess what. That costs a lot of private employers a great deal of money because the people aren't doing the work, and they probably would be paid. So essentially this impacts our economy, and it is multiplied. And it will be exponentially multiplied if we start cutting away the money, as suggested in the Budget Control Act.

It is now time to work together and to enact first a clean CR, which will give us the time to systematically and comprehensively address the issues that are staring us straight in the face because of the BCA—the budget caps on Defense and nondefense. It is time to be able to move—as I believe the vast majority of my colleagues want to—the excess OCO funding back into the regular budget of the Department of Defense as we raise the budget cap, and as we raise the budget cap for the Department of Defense, to recognize we have to raise the cap not only for other national security agencies to protect our country, but also for other agencies in order to invest in our economy, keep us productive, keep people employed, and also keep faith with the thousands and thousands of Americans who have worked and now may need help. There are seniors in need of rental assistance. They need the support of a good transit system to get to work or, if they are a senior citizen, to get to a doctor's appointment. They are counting on us.

So I hope all my colleagues can come together, forge an agreement, avoid a shutdown, and then do something more than just keep the lights on—invest across the board in our people and watch those investments multiply to a productive, successful economy and a more secure America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 224

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, in 1975, Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov was awarded a Nobel Prize for his public opposition to the totalitarian communism of the Soviet Union. He knew what he was talking about as he had spent decades working on the Soviet nuclear weapons program, work he had originally thought was a patriotic duty that would ensure the balance of power with the United States but that he came to understand was in the service of a brutal, oppressive regime with aggressive intentions.

The Soviets prohibited Sakharov from accepting the award in person, although his wife Yelena Bonner was abroad at the time. She accepted on his behalf and delivered his seminal speech, ''Peace, Progress, and Human Rights.'' In it, Sakharov declared:

> I am convinced that international confidence, mutual understanding, disarmament, and international security are inconceivable without an open society with freedom of information, freedom of conscience, the right to publish, and the right to travel and choose the country in which one wishes to live. I am likewise convinced that freedom of conscience, together with other civil rights, provides the basis for scientific progress and constitutes a guarantee that scientific advances will not be used to despoil mankind, providing the basis for economic and social progress, which in turn is a political guarantee for the possibility of an effective defense of social rights.

He recited the names of his fellow dissidents who were being persecuted by the Soviets, but he called for peaceful reform, not a violent revolution, saying:

> We must today fight for every individual person separately against injustice and the violation of human rights. Much of our future depends on this. In struggling to protect human rights we must, I am convinced, first and foremost act as protectors of the innocent victims of regimes installed in various countries, without demanding the destruction or total condemnation of these regimes. We need a pliant, pluralist, tolerant community, which selectively and tentatively can bring about a free undogmatic use of the experiences of all social systems.

Sakharov was relieved of all his scientific duties and, after denouncing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, was banished to Gorky, 250 miles east of Moscow on the Volga River, to remove him from the public eye. His wife joined him in 1984, charged with anti-Soviet slander, and was prohibited from traveling abroad for medical treatment. Sakharov began a hunger strike in protest. Soviet authorities detained and force-fed him.

In solidarity, President Ronald Reagan—who was then initiating his historic negotiations with the Soviets—proclaimed May 18, 1983, National Andrei Sakharov Day, and the following year the United States Congress passed a bipartisan measure renaming the mailing address of the Soviet Embassy from 1125 16th Street to No. 1 Andrei Sakharov Plaza. Every piece of mail delivered to or sent from the embassy would thus bear the name of the courageous dissident the Soviets were trying to silence.

The following year, the Soviet Union allowed Bonner to travel abroad for heart surgery, and the year after that, Gorbachev allowed Sakharov and his wife to return to Moscow, although Sakharov remained critical of the slow speed of Gorbachev's reforms until his death in 1989—just 1 month after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The bravery of Andrei Sakharov was instrumental in bringing down a great and oppressive empire. Armed only with the truth, he was able to expose to the world the reality of Soviet Communism, the futility of trying to placate or domesticate the regime, and the power of standing for human rights.

Today, we have a case before us that is eerily reminiscent of Sakharov's legacy. Dr. Liu Xiaobo, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, sits today in a Chinese jail for the crime of subversion.

A poet, author, and political scientist, Dr. Liu was in 1989 a visiting scholar at Columbia University, but when the pro-democracy protests broke out in Beijing in June of that year, he returned to China to aid the movement. He staged a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square in the midst of the historic student protests and insisted the protests would be nonviolent, even in the face of the violence threatened by the People's Republic of China. The PRC arrested Liu for his involvement in the Tiananmen Square demonstration and sentenced him to 2 years in prison. In 1996, the party subjected him to 3 years of ''reeducation through labor'' for questioning the single-party system. In 2004, the PRC cut Liu's phone lines and Internet connection after he published an essay criticizing the party's campaign to silence so-called subversive journalists and activists.

In 2008, Liu, along with over 350 Chinese intellectuals and human rights advocates, penned ''Charter 08,'' a manifesto modeled after the Czech ''Charter 77,'' an anti-Communist manifesto written in 1977 by Vaclav Havel and others calling for human rights and political reforms in the Soviet Republics.

Dr. Liu's ''Charter 08'' made 19 specific demands of the PRC, including abandoning one-party rule in favor of instituting a separation of powers composed of a legislative democracy and independent judiciary; abolition of the Hukou housing system that has victimized poor and rural Chinese for decades; and securing freedom of association, assembly, expression, and religion. ''Charter 08'' was released on December 10, 2008. Although the Communist Party quickly censored it, over 10,000 journalists, scholars, businessmen, and teachers have signed the document since 2008.

Two days prior to the release of ''Charter 08''—on the eve of the 100-year anniversary of China's first Constitution and the 30-year anniversary of Beijing's Democracy Wall movement—the PRC detained Liu for his involvement in this charter. In June 2009, he was officially arrested and charged with ''inciting subversion of state power'' for his coauthorship of ''Charter 08.''

After being detained for over a year, Liu pled not guilty to ''inciting subversion of state power'' before the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 23, 2009. His defense was not allowed to present evidence, and on Christmas Day Liu was sentenced to 11 years in prison with an additional 2 years' deprivation of all political rights. Beijing High Court rejected his appeal 2 months later.

On October 2010, Dr. Liu Xiaobo received the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in writing and publishing ''Charter 08.'' Like Sakharov, he could not attend in person but accepted in absentia, boldly declaring in his acceptance speech:

> Hatred can rot away at a person's intelligence and conscience. Enemy mentality will poison the spirit of a nation, incite cruel mortal struggles, destroy a society's tolerance and humanity, and hinder a nation's progress toward freedom and democracy. That is why I hope to be able to transcend my personal experiences as I look upon our nation's development and social change, to counter the regime's hostility with utmost goodwill, and to dispel hatred with love.

The very moment the Nobel Commission awarded the Peace Prize to Liu, his wife Liu Xia was taken into custody by the PRC. She penned an open letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping in June 2013 decrying her unjust arrest and detention:

> I have been under house arrest and have lost all my personal freedoms since October 2010. No one has told me any reasons for detaining me. I have thought about it over and over. Perhaps in this country it's a ''crime'' for me to be ''Liu Xiaobo's wife.''

Both Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia remain in prison today. The opening paragraph of ''Charter 08'' captures the entirety of Liu Xiaobo's lifework:

> Having experienced a prolonged period of human rights disasters and challenging and tortuous struggles, the awakening Chinese citizens are becoming increasingly aware that freedom, equality and human rights are universal values shared by all humankind, and that democracy, republicanism, and constitutional government make up the basic institutional framework of modern politics. A 'modernization' bereft of these universal values and this basic political framework is a disastrous process that deprives people of their rights, rots away their humanity, and destroys their dignity. Where is China headed in the 21st century? Will it continue with this 'modernization' under authoritarian rule, or will it endorse universal values, join the mainstream civilization, and build a democratic form of government? This is an unavoidable decision.

Dr. Liu's enormous courage and willingness to voluntarily sacrifice not only his own freedom but also that of those most dear to him poses a challenge to the free world. Will we be silent, eager to enjoy the economic benefits of cooperation with the PRC? Or will we put President Xi on notice that

for America, human rights are no longer off the table, and that we are listening to the truth about Communist China.

I believe that the freedom championed by Dr. Liu is possible for all the Chinese people. I believe that from Tiananmen Square to Taiwan, the evidence is clear that the Chinese desire—and are capable of—democracy. I believe that we have a moral responsibility to not marginalize Dr. Liu and his brave fellow dissidents but to make their plight central to all our dealings with the PRC.

For that reason, we should follow the example of Ronald Reagan. We should follow the example of standing up to oppression, standing up do the Soviet Union's oppression of Andrei Sakharov. For that reason, in solidarity with the Chinese people engaged in a long and nonviolent struggle for basic human rights, I am asking my colleagues to join me in creating a new version of Sakharov Plaza by naming the street in front of the People's Republic of China Embassy in Washington, DC, Liu Xiaobo Plaza. This would be the street sign that the Chinese Ambassador would look at each day. This would be the address that every piece of correspondence going into the embassy and coming out of the embassy would have written on it, just as with the Soviets when forced to recognize the bravery of Sakharov.

The PRC officials will be forced to recognize the bravery of Dr. Liu and to acknowledge it dozens of times a day, day after day. I realize that this is an expedited request, but given the ongoing repression not only of the Lius but of so many other voices for political and religious freedom in China and the imminent arrival of the Chinese leader who is directly responsible for it, I hope that my colleagues will join me. I intend to propound a unanimous consent request, and it is my hope that all 100 Senators will stand with me.

But for the moment, I yield the floor.

Mr. CRUZ addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, for reasons that I just detailed to this Chamber, reasons for which we should stand in bipartisan unanimity in support of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Liu Xiaobo and in support of human rights and dissidents across the world, that we should follow the successful pattern of Sakharov Plaza under Ronald Reagan, this should be an issue that brings us all together.

Accordingly, I ask unanimous consent that the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of and that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 224. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I would like to make an observation. The notice for this went out less than an hour ago. The consultations with others haven't been made. It was precipitously brought to the floor, and I can only infer that it has political implications, because the President of China is due to arrive here tomorrow and, therefore, this would be passed today, moved out of committee without a vote in front of the Senate.

I don't think that is the way we should do business in this Senate. Maybe people don't believe diplomacy makes a difference, but I do. I think there will be ample time for the President to speak with the President of China and for some of us to speak as well. This is, of course—the human rights, of course—a subject. But in the absence of that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I note that this is a sad day for this body. When standing up to the Soviet Union, Democrats and Republicans were able to come together in support of Andrei Sakharov, and it worked. It made a difference speaking up for human rights. The senior Senator from California is correct that this was expedited, and she is correct as to why. As I said in this floor speech, the presence of President Xi in this country is precisely the reason that we should stand in unanimity in support of human rights. It is what makes it timely until a few minutes ago, when we had been informed that there were no objections on the Democratic side and Republican side. It saddens me. I know there are many Chinese Americans in the State of California, there are many Chinese Americans in the State of Texas, and across the country there are millions of Americans who care for human rights.

Just this morning we sat on the floor of the House of Representatives and listened to Pope Francis talk about putting aside petty partisan differences and coming together with a voice of compassion.

Dr. Liu is in a Chinese prison, and the senior Senator from California is standing and objecting to recognizing this Nobel laureate's bravery, is standing and objecting because presumably it would embarrass his Communist captors. I, for one, think as Americans we should not be troubled by embarrassing Communist oppressors.

I note, as the senior Senator from California leaves the floor, that this is not an issue that is abstract to me. My family, like Dr. Liu, has been imprisoned by oppressive regimes. My father, as a teenager, was imprisoned and tortured in Cuba. He had his nose broken. He had his teeth shattered. He lay in the blood and grime of a prison cell in Cuba. My aunt, my Tia Sonia, was a few years later again imprisoned and tortured. This time by Castro. My father by Batista and my aunt by Castro was imprisoned and tortured by a Communist regime. It is a sad statement when the United States of America cannot stand up and say: You who are imprisoned unjustly, we stand with you.

If any of us listened to a word Pope Francis said this morning, that is a word we should have heard—that we should be a voice of freedom, a clarion voice of freedom across this globe. What we saw on this Senate floor saddens me greatly. I understand the Democrats feel partisan loyalty to the White House, and this White House's Secretary Clinton said at the beginning of the administration that human rights are off the table. America no longer stands for human rights. We will coddle up with oppressors if they make cheap calculators to sell in our stores. I think they are values that transcend the mighty dollar, and it is entirely possible to deal with foreign countries and yet maintain our principles and speak with unanimity.

A couple of years ago I had the opportunity to visit with Natan Sharansky, the famed Soviet dissident. He and I visited in Jerusalem. He talked to me about how, when he was in the Soviet gulag, the prisoners would pass from cell to cell notes: Did you hear what President Reagan said—''evil empire,'' ''ash heap of history,'' ''tear down this wall''? The leadership of the United States of America—mind you, it wasn't partisan leadership; it was clear bipartisan leadership in America—shined a light to the dark of those prison cells.

I pray today that Dr. Liu, in his prison cell, does not hear word that the Democratic Senators are unwilling to stand with him. That is heartbreaking at a level rarely seen. It is one thing for us to disagree on partisan matters. We can have disagreements over the appropriate rate of capital gains taxes. But for standing with an oppressed Nobel Peace Prize laureate, for standing up to Communist oppression, that should not be a partisan divide.

The objection raised by the senior Senator from California is deeply disappointing, and I intend to continue to press this issue because the voice of America, the voice for freedom that Pope Francis urged us to aspire to will not be extinguished. It is who we are that is essential to our character and to our integrity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, over the course of the summer we have watched with horror as thousands more have died in Syria and Iraq, and the debate over what we should do about it has been omnipresent here in the Senate and in the House. We have held hearings, appeared on television to tell our story of how we should respond, and talked about it on the floor of the

Senate and the House. Similarly, we have watched the conflict continue to persist in eastern Ukraine. Although they have not had the same number of casualties as we have seen in Syria and Iraq, they have had similar death and destruction, and we have responded with a vigorous debate on the floor of the Senate—again, hearings in committees, letters to the President, bipartisan pieces of legislation that have been proposed—about how the United States should seek to reduce the amount of casualties in a place like eastern Ukraine, and we are also debating what our response should be in Syria and Iraq.

What if I told you that this summer 4,000 people died in another conflict in which there was absolutely no debate here in the Congress? What if I told you there were 4,000 people who died this summer in a conflict and not a single committee in the Congress held a hearing on it? What if I told you there was a conflict this summer in which 4,000 people perished and not a single Member of the majority party in the House or the Senate has proposed any comprehensive way to deal with it?

This chart shows the number of people on a daily, monthly, and annual basis who are killed by guns. On average, it is 86 a day, 26,000 a month, and 31,000 a year. This summer, while kids were out of school, over 4,000 people—just this summer—died across this country from gun violence. I come to the floor not as often as I would like but as often as I can to tell some of their stories because I kind of thought these numbers would be enough to persuade Members of this body to do something—anything—to try to stem the scourge of gun violence in this body, but it hasn't, and so my hope is maybe by telling the stories of some of these individuals, it will hopefully make a difference. Every day we add dozens of stories of young men and women—mostly young men and women—whose lives were cut short, whose greatness we were never able to see, whose potential was never realized because they were killed by a gun.

This summer we have been gripped by mass shooting after mass shooting.

Cynthia Hurd, Tywanza Sanders, Sharonda Singleton, Myra Thompson, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Daniel Simmons, and DePayne Doctor, and Clementa Pinckney—we don't know all of those names, but we know about many of them because they were killed at a mass shooting in a church in South Carolina.

Sgt Carson Holmquist, PO2 Randall Smith, GySgt Thomas Sullivan, LCpl ''Skip'' Wells, and SSgt David Wyatt—maybe you have heard their names because they were all killed at a shooting in Tennessee at a Chattanooga Armed Forces recruiting center.

Maybe you have heard of Jillian Johnson and Mayci Breaux, who were killed in a movie theater in Lafayette, LA, in July of this year.

Most people have now heard of Allison Parker and Adam Ward, who were gunned down on live TV just a few weeks ago in Virginia.

On each one of those days—June 17, a shooting in South Carolina; July 16, a shooting in Tennessee; July 24, a shooting in Louisiana; and August 26, a shooting in Virginia—there were dozens more people who died from gunshot wounds whom we never heard of, but they meant something to their families. To this day their loss is experienced deeply by those who knew them well.

Some of them were people who were close to those of us who serve in public service. Matthew Shlonsky was killed this summer in Washington, DC. On August 15 he was heading to a going-away party, and he had just stepped out of a cab when he was shot outside of the Shaw-Howard Metro station. He was the sixth gunshot victim in the Shaw area in a little over a week.

Think about what it is like to live in a neighborhood in which there have been six shootings over the course of a week. Think of the fear that breeds in those communities.

We knew Matthew because he was an intern for one of our colleagues. He was working as a consultant at Deloitte, but he had served as a Senate intern. He was an amazing kid by all accounts. He traveled the world, spoke two languages, and was a star hockey player. His future was absolutely limitless. But because this city is awash in guns—many of them illegal, many of them in the hands of criminals who get them because of giant, gaping holes in our background check system—Matthew Shlonsky is no longer with us. He is dead at the age of 23.

How about the heartbreaking story of Carey Gabay, who was 43 years old. He was serving as an assistant counsel to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, and before that he had been counsel of the Empire State Development Corporation. He died on September 16—just on the back end of the summer—after he was caught in the crossfire of a shooting in New York City. He was an innocent bystander when he was shot in the head while attending the pre-West Indian American Day Parade festival with friends and family.

He was the son of Jamaican immigrants and grew up in public housing in the Bronx. He had done amazingly well. He attended Harvard University and Harvard Law School. He was working for the Governor and trying to make a better life for others by trying to give opportunities to kids who grow up in the same circumstance as he did. A friend described him as ''an amazing human being who melded public service, professionalism, personal integrity with warmth and caring for everyone he knew.'' He was 43 years old when he was gunned down in broad daylight outside of a festival simply because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

This summer 4,000 people were killed by guns, and not a single public hearing has occurred in the U.S. Senate to discuss a solution. There is not even mention of a debate happening anytime soon on the floor of the Senate as to how we stop these episodes of mass slaughter. We are averaging more than one mass shooting in this country every single day this year. That is astounding. That is shocking. Yet there is total, utter, absolute silence from the world's greatest deliberative body on what we should do about it.

I am the last person to say there is any panacea coming from the Congress on how to stem gun violence. We are never going to be able to eliminate these epidemic rates of gun violence just by one law or set of laws that are passed. But what is an absolute indictment of this place is that we don't even try.

I have made this contention on the floor before, and I will make it again. I truly believe our silence on this has become complicity. We have become accomplices to these murders because by saying and doing nothing, we offer up a kind of quiet endorsement to people who exist in the fringes of their minds and who are thinking about contemplating violence, and the leaders of this country are doing absolutely nothing to seriously condemn or stop their destructive, malevolent behavior. Our silence has become complicit.

I hope that at some point over the course of the rest of this year, we can begin a conversation as to how we can turn these numbers back in the right direction. There is no other country in the industrialized world that even comes close to these numbers.

I can offer a suggestion on where to start. If between now and December we can't come to a common understanding on our gun laws—I still don't understand why we can't just do that since 90 percent of Americans support expansive background checks—let's start by fixing the mental health care system.

I think there are a lot of reasons why Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 kids over 2 years ago. The child advocate in Connecticut issued a damning report on his interactions with the mental health care system. His mother tried and tried and tried, but in the end she gave up and let him retreat into the isolation of his room, where he plotted these murders. That family and mother and young man ran into barrier after barrier and obstacle after obstacle trying to find a course of treatment for his very serious set of illnesses.

What we know is that people with mental illness are much more likely to be the victims of gun violence than the perpetrators of it. There is no inherent connection between being mentally ill and being violent. There is no greater incidence of mental illness in the United States than anywhere else in the world. Yet we have epidemic rates of gun violence. But I will certainly be the first to admit that if we fix our mental health care system, it will help lots of people who have no intersections with gun violence, and it will

push these numbers downward because some of these people are committing these murders because they are not getting treatment for serious illnesses.

Senator CASSIDY and I—frankly, we don't agree on a lot because he is a conservative Republican from the Deep South, and I am a progressive Democrat from the Northeast—introduced a mental health reform measure which has broad bipartisan support and which would seek to break down these barriers in order to get care for the seriously mentally ill and try to get the parents more involved in the care, especially of young adults. It would increase the capacity in our mental health treatment system for both outpatient and inpatient care. Maybe over the course of the rest of this year, at the very least we can make a dent in the massive shortfalls in our behavioral health care system.

The families I have become so close with in Sandy Hook, CT, commanded me to come down to the floor every week or so and tell these stories, the voices of victims. They would like us to come together on a set of meaningful changes to our gun laws. They just don't understand why Adam Lanza was able to walk into the school with a gun that killed 20 little boys and girls in less than 5 minutes because of how powerful it was with the 30-round cartridges he was able to use. They don't want our inability to get action on gun laws to stop us from making other progress that would make the next Adam Lanza less likely. Maybe we can do that. But we should do something.

Our silence is an embarrassment after this summer of mass shootings. These news reports should command us to action, but we, frankly, shouldn't have had to wait for the news reports of shootings in Virginia or Louisiana or South Carolina because these numbers were just as true last year as they are this year. Maybe there are more episodes of mass violence and mass shootings and headline-grabbing atrocities, but these numbers which reflect what is happening on the ground in New Haven, CT; Hartford, CT; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; and Los Angeles have been a reality for a long time, and we should have woken up long ago. But maybe over the course of this year we can make some progress so that moving forward there are a few less voices of victims to bring to the floor of the Senate.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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.

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

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

VOLKSWAGEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise to speak about recent revelations that Volkswagen woefully deceived regulators and the general public to artificially lower emissions of its 2009 to 2015 Volkswagen and Audi diesel vehicles. These actions raise significant consumer, environmental, and public health concerns.

According to the EPA's Notice of Violation of the Clean Air Act, Volkswagen used a sophisticated software algorithm on certain vehicles that detected when vehicles were undergoing emissions testing. This software—referred to as a ''defeat device''—allows vehicles to meet emissions standards during testing, but under normal driving situations, these same vehicles emit nitrogen oxides up to 40 times the allowable emissions standards.

This is unbelievable. I think we can imagine that such technology exists, but I don't think we ever thought that one of our major international car companies would be alleged to have used it. So far approximately 482,000 diesel vehicles sold in the United States and 11 million cars worldwide have been affected. A deliberate attempt like this by a company to mislead regulators and the general public is completely unacceptable.

This raises serious questions that need answers: Why did Volkswagen, for more than a year, claim that the discrepancies in the emissions tests and the levels on the road were a technical error? Who at Volkswagen signed off on the defeat device? Did executives at Volkswagen know these actions were put into place to deliberately deceive regulators and the general public? Does the EPA have the necessary testing systems in place to detect such devices that trick the software? Have other auto manufacturers of clean diesel vehicles been tampering with their software to get around emissions standards? How do we ensure that this never happens again?

This is a matter of public trust. Consumers were lied to and sold a product under false pretenses. Those consumers who brought certain Volkswagen Jettas, Beetles, Passats, and certain Audis with 2-liter diesel engines believed they were purchasing a vehicle that would provide premium fuel economy and performance while also meeting strict emissions standards. Who wouldn't be enticed by these vehicles after they were named the ''Green Car of the Year'' and ''Eco-Friendly Car of the Year'' by national publications?

We now know these consumers were duped and that they will now have to bring their vehicles under compliance to meet Federal emissions standards. Volkswagen will likely pay for the repairs but what about the costs of reduced fuel economy and lower resale values?

Congress intentionally included strong enforceability elements into the Clean Air Act statute. Regulations promulgated under the Clean Air Act aimed to protect human health and the environment by reducing nitrogen oxide and other pollutants. Motor vehicles are the primary source of nitrogen oxide pollution from transportation. These highly reactive gases play a major role in atmospheric reactions that produce smog.

That smog accelerates climate change and exacerbates respiratory diseases that harm human health, including asthma, which affects 23 million Americans, including 6 million children.

That is why we have emissions standards. It is not just some far-off number that is put into place; it is to protect children from getting asthma; it is to protect the world from heating up; it is to ensure that we protect our environment for generations to come.

The Clean Air Act requires automakers to certify to the EPA that their vehicles will meet applicable Federal emissions standards to control air pollution. Through this process, Volkswagen deceived regulators into believing these vehicles produced low emissions. Vehicles with the defeat device emit anywhere from 5 to 40 times more nitrogen oxide than allowed by law while on the road. If we pick a number in the middle of the range—let's say 20 times as much—it would mean that Volkswagen's fleet in the U.S. produces 46,657 more tons of harmful smog.

Changes to the EPA's emissions standards testing process are needed as well. I have written to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to express that concern. The EPA needs to explain why their systems did not detect this deceptive software and what changes the Agency will be making with their testing processes. I strongly urge the EPA to establish robust safeguards to prevent automakers from gaming the system and prevent this from happening again.

There must also be a full investigation into Volkswagen's actions. The Department of Justice is conducting a criminal investigation into the company's actions, and I urge DOJ to leave no stone unturned in its investigation to determine how a company could have willfully deceived Federal regulators and the general public.

Volkswagen must conduct a thorough and comprehensive public education campaign to ensure that all owners of these vehicles are made aware of the defect and are informed about where and when they can go to get their vehicle fixed.

The Department of Transportation, which has expertise with vehicle recalls, should also play an active role. If we learned anything from the General Motors and Takata airbag recalls, it is that recalls need to be broad enough from the outset and cover affected vehicle models and years, the general public needs to know how and where to get their vehicle repaired, and automakers must have a system in place to make timely repairs with replacement parts that truly fix the problem.

Other agencies, such as the Federal Trade Commission, should also take a serious look at how they can help in this process.

As a member of both the Senate Commerce Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee, I believe that consumers must be protected. I also believe Volkswagen's competitors that actually follow the law should be able to play on an even playing field. Other car companies that follow the law did the right thing. They put the right systems in place, and they should not be penalized because one car company did this. They should have been able to play on an even playing field. If there is an uneven playing field, it hurts American employees, it hurts American companies, and mostly it hurts American consumers.

The actions by Volkswagen to deliberately deceive consumers around the world about the emissions levels in their cars is fundamentally about a breach in trust. Consumers thought they were getting the same product that was being advertised, when what they were getting was a product that met those standards only when it was tested, only for 1 day, and only for the time of the emissions testing.

As Federal agencies move forward with their investigation, it is critical that we get to the bottom of this to figure out how this happened, what the extent was, and if it is happening with any other automakers to ensure that what happened never happens again.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

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

PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS 2

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I wish to take advantage of an opportunity to bring up the subject that no one is talking about now. Of course, right now everyone has been in the middle of the Pope's visit and other things and what is happening with the Iran bill and the votes we have. I wish to mention there is something else very significant going on right now, that we are in the middle of, and that is the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2.

To put it into perspective, 3 years ago last month we had the Pilot's Bill of Rights 1, and it was one people were not aware of. There are only 617,000 pilots in America, so it is not one of these issues that gets an awful lot of attention. But the mere fact that those 617,000 people—many of them are single-issue people. A lot of people are not aware that prior to the passage of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 3 years ago, there was just one area left within our system whereupon you are guilty until proven innocent.

That is exactly what we corrected with that bill, just to refresh the memory of my colleagues. It gave the pilots who were accused of something the evidence that was used against them. I had a personal experience with it. It actually happened to me. I was never sensitive to that until such time as I experienced it myself.

What we have right now is we are up to 64 cosponsors of the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2. The major part of this bill is something that is out there that doesn't resolve anything. Ten years ago, as kind of an experiment, we put in a sport pilot-eligible exemption so that the pilots of small aircraft would not have to have what they call a third-class medical. The result of this was that after a 10-year period, the medical safety experience of these pilots has been identical to those with medical certificates. A joint study was made following that by the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association and by the EAA, the Experimental Aircraft Association, of the 46,976 accidents over a 6-year period. Of those, only 99 had a medical cause as a factor. That is less than one-quarter of 1 percent. Of those 99, none would have been prevented by the current third-class medical. That shows that experiment worked and there is no reason to have a third-class medical.

So people are aware that some changes have been made, I want to briefly outline the modifications that have been made. The modifications require three things for pilots to qualify for an exemption. The exemption we are talking about is the exemption from having to take a third-class medical exemption process every 2 years—sometimes more extensive than that.

First, pilots will have to complete an online medical education course. Secondly, pilots have to maintain verification that they have been to a doctor at least once every 4 years and certify that they are receiving the care they need by a physician to treat any medical condition that warrants it. Third, a pilot would have to complete a comprehensive medical review by the FAA. That would be applied to a new pilot, so they establish a benchmark as to what a pilot's physical condition is.

The pilot would be required to take an online medical course every 2 years. This gives the pilot access to information on medical issues that may not be covered by a doctor in a medical examination but that would have an impact on their physical condition to fly. For example, this course would make sure pilots are aware of impacts on interactions of over-the-counter and prescription medications and how these interactions could impact their flying capabilities. Requiring pilots to take this course boosts aviation safety for the aviation community.

Secondly, pilots would need to complete an exam by their personal physician at least once every 4 years and include a proof of their doctor's visit in their logbooks. This resolves the problem most people are concerned about; that they would have to at least see a physician and be assured that they didn't have some condition they didn't have prior to that. Furthermore, the pilots would be required to certify that they are under the care and treatment of a doctor for any medical condition that would warrant treatment. Pilots would do this instead of visiting an aviation medical examiner every 2 years and sometimes even more frequently than that. With this modification, we are actually encouraging pilots to be honest about their health and seek treatment for it.

Right now pilots are incentivized to hide any medical condition from the FAA, including by not seeking treatment for it, out of the fear that the pilot might lose his wings. We don't want that to happen. People who are not pilots do not realize how significant it is that you don't want to be taken out of the air, particularly for some reason that is not justified. Pilots, like any individual, maintain stronger relationships with their personal physician, and this is a good thing that fosters an honest dialogue between pilots and doctors, which is something we should all want and something that is not there today.

We want pilots to get the treatment they need. Any medically treated pilot is safer than one who is not being treated. So for many pilots the most burdensome aspects of the FAA controversy is simply the constant churn of submitting paperwork over and over, every 2 years or less, even when there has been no change in their medical status. This bill, as modified, gives pilots a break from the bureaucracy.

The third requirement for pilots to receive the third-class medical exemption is to complete one FAA medical review. So if a new pilot comes in, we need a benchmark—where is that pilot, what is his physical condition today—so as time goes by we can see how he might be changing. If someone does not have an existing medical certificate, such as new pilots who have never gone through an exam, they would have to do it before they fall into qualifying for the exemption. By the way, of the 617,000 pilots in America today, this is the one thing that concerns me more than anything else, which is to have to go back and go through the type of examination they are required to, now that we know the 10-year experiment of being exempt has worked.

There is one caveat. If a pilot flying under the third-class medical exemption is diagnosed with a severe condition—let's talk about maybe a heart attack—then they need to go through the FAA special issuance process to receive medical clearance to fly again. Again, this would only be needed to be done one time.

The ability of the FAA to maintain a stranglehold on pilots will be gone. I am confident the changes will result in a safer flying environment. I want to reiterate that the Pilot's Bill of Rights does not change the certification standard to obtain a pilot's certificate. All pilots still have to possess the pilot's certificate, pass the required practical tests and necessary check rides to

demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills, and ability to safely operate their plane.

Further, this bill does not change the fundamental responsibility of every pilot to self-certify their ability to fly each time they get into the cockpit of a plane. I am a pilot, and every time I get in a plane I make a conscious decision that I am fit to fly. Everyone I know who is a pilot does the same thing.

Again, all of this is not necessary. When you go back and realize that over the 10 years of the experiment with a limited number of pilots there were no changes. There is no difference between those who have or have not had the pilot exams. With these changes, the third-class medical exemption and the Pilot's Bill of Rights is enjoying a greater level of support from Members of the Senate. Support from general aviation is strongly bipartisan. Sixty-four of my colleagues are cosponsors of this legislation. Half of those are Democrats and half are Republicans. Groups representing general aviation in the community and in the pilot unions have declared their support for the bill. General aviation organizations, such as the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, the Experimental Pilots Association, and the General Aviation Manufacturers Association, support the bill. The National Association of State Aviation Officials support the bill, the Allied Pilots Association and the Southwest Pilots Association, both unions which represent 23,000 pilots who fly for American Airlines, U.S. Airways, and Southwest Airlines, support the bill. Pilots for NetJets support the bill.

The bill has strong bipartisan support. I urge all the Members who support general aviation and all the economic activity of general aviation to be a part of this bill.

One of the reasons I am doing this today is one of the two organizations—and I am not sure which one it is, it is either the AOPA or the AA—is doing a major effort right now to encourage the pilot population out there to encourage their Members of the Senate to cosponsor this bill. Again, we currently have 64 sponsors of the bill. I can't think of any reason we can't get everyone else. The same individuals who supported it 3 years ago should be there to support it. So I encourage those few Members of the Senate who are not sponsors to look at it very carefully.

It may be 617,000 people are not a lot of people, but of the 617,000 people, most of them are single-issue people. So it would be very good to join in on this. This is something we now have demonstrated clearly is not going to incur any safety hazards and it is going to be a real godsend for pilots who don't want to go through this bureaucracy every 2 years or more frequently in some cases. The bill is out there, and it is one I feel very strongly that we ought to be able to work into our floor use probably in the next very short period of time.

With that, I do yield the floor because my very good friend from Delaware is here to say something profound.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I don't know that I will say anything profound, but I appreciate the chairman of our committee saying that.

Madam President, and fellow native West Virginian, I will show a map of the United States in just a minute, and there are some States that are delaying and some States that are cutting back on transportation projects. One of them is West Virginia. One of them is Delaware. I want to talk a little bit about that.

Before I do, I would like to go back in time 10 months to the election of last year. I am reminded of the message I heard from the electorate that came out of that election. To simplify it, there were three things they were trying to tell us. No. 1, they want us to work together; No. 2, they want us to get things done; and, No. 3, they want us to get things done that will actually strengthen our economic recovery.

If you go back in time to the January—the week Barack Obama and JOE BIDEN were inaugurated as President and Vice President, 628,000 people filed for unemployment insurance in that 1 week in January of 2009. Any time that weekly number of people filing for unemployment insurance is over 400,000, we are losing jobs in this country and in the economy.

Last Thursday we got a number from the Department of Labor. Last week's number was about 265,000 who filed for unemployment. That was last week. There is a new number today—I am not sure what it was, but for the last 28 weeks that number of people filing for unemployment insurance has been under 300,000. I think that is the longest that we have been keeping track, where we had 28 consecutive weeks where fewer than 300,000 people in this country were applying for unemployment insurance. That number is way under 400,000, so we are adding jobs, and we are expecting to continue to add jobs in this country.

There are still people looking for jobs in my State, there are in West Virginia, and other States as well, but when you consider the unemployment rate was about 10 percent in the early part of 2009 and today it is a little over 5 percent, we are making progress, but we can make a lot more progress.

One of the ways we can make progress is by dealing with our fiscal plan and not hold the Nation's economy hostage with our inability to pass a spending plan. And God help us if we drop the ball on this again and have another shutdown. I sure hope we come to our senses and avoid doing that. My hope is that we will.

One of the other ways we can strengthen our economic recovery—and it is right out there for us to seize and do—is to make sure that in a nation where roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems are deteriorating, where we need to make improvements and we need to build, frankly, new projects—new highways, bridges, roads and transit systems—at the very least we need to maintain the quality of what we have or improve the quality of road safety, surfaces, potholes, you name it. There is a lot of work to be done, and there are a lot of people who would like to do the work.

The McKinsey Global Institute, an arm of the national consulting firm McKinsey, looked at what we could do for our growing GDP in this country if we fully funded a 6-year transportation plan, what we could do for an employment opportunity if we funded a 6-year transportation plan, and the numbers are remarkable—I think amazing.

We were told that fully funding a 6-year transportation plan would grow our GDP by approximately 1.5 percent per year—not for 1 year but for the life of the transportation plan that we funded—probably 6 years at 1.5 percent a year. When you consider the GDP growth over the last couple years, even though it is better than it was, adding 1.5 percent of the GDP growth would help our economy grow in a robust way. We are told by McKinsey & Company's study that a 6-year transportation plan robustly funded would put about 1.8 million people to work. A lot of folks would like to be building roads, highways, and transportation systems, and they don't have employment opportunities because we are not funding them. We are not funding them.

Let's take a quick look at this map if we could. The States that are gray are States, as far as we know, that are not planning to delay or cancel projects. They are not even considering delaying projects, but the States that are in red, including Delaware over here, are States that have delayed or cancelled projects. The States that are in yellow, including West Virginia, are States that are considering project delays.

That is not good. I have not counted the number of States—it looks like seven—that are in red. Those are the States that have delayed projects. More than that, probably 10, are considering doing that. Why is it important for us to fully fund at the Federal level—do our share for roads, highways, bridges, transit funding? It is because about half of the money that our States spend through their departments of transportation, half their money comes from Federal user fees—largely Federal user fees—primarily, not entirely, but primarily user fees on the sale of gasoline. It has been unchanged in 23 years—not since 1993—22 years. The user fee on diesel has been unchanged for some 22 years, right where we were. The price of everything else goes up. Concrete goes up, asphalt goes up, steel goes up, and labor goes up.

We have more energy-efficient vehicles. They are not using as much gas or

diesel. That is a good thing, but it is also a bad thing for having funding for transportation projects. So I want to look at a map and would invite all of us to consider it. I don't anybody who says—any economist worth their salt—who does not say: Fully funding a multi-year transportation plan, not for 6 months or 3 months, something like that, but fully funding it—robustly funding it for 6 years—will do great things for our economy.

The reason we end up with job growth of something like 1.8 million people, according to McKinsey and Company, is because the economy works far more efficiently if roads, highways, bridges are operating and working well. So I just want to share that and start off my remarks today.

I have some numbers here that I would like to share. So far in 2015, this year, four States—Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, and Wyoming—have shelved some $805 million in projects due to the uncertainty over Federal funds. Again, the uncertainty is over roughly half the money that they are going to spend on roads, highways, and bridges. It comes from Federal user fees, Federal taxes.

Our transportation system—at least the way we fund it—has been broken since 2008. Since that time, in the last 5 or 6 years, we have passed I think 12 short-term patches to the tune of nearly $74 billion. How do we pay for them? We pay for them with budget gimmicks. That is how we do it. And we pay for them with debt. When we issue debt, we borrow money. We sell Treasury securities, and we sell them around the world. Among the countries that buy them are China and the Chinese people. We are then beholden to them as our creditors. It puts us in a situation that I do not find too comfortable. My guess is some of you don't either.

There are better alternatives to fund our Nation's transportation system. I only mentioned a couple of them. I feel as if I have not a magic wand but the ability to see into the future. Twenty years from now, I think there is a pretty good chance that we will have figured out how to pay for roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems by figuring out how to make sure those folks who use transportation pay for it. One of the ways we are trying to do that—they have been trying to do that in Oregon for almost 10 years. They have something called road user charge. Some people have heard of that term. More people have heard of something called vehicle miles traveled, and the ability to say your vehicle—I don't care what kind of vehicle it is, but we know how many miles that vehicle travels on a road, highway or bridge in the course of a year. There is fee that is attached to that. Some people are uncomfortable with that because it has implications on privacy. I can understand that.

In Oregon they are trying to figure it out. They have got about 5,000 vehicles—at least—in their system. They are sort of—I like to say States are laboratories of democracy. In this case, Oregon is trying to be the laboratory. I believe California is looking at being another laboratory to figure out we make something like vehicle miles traveled work in a State. Oregon is good-sized state, and California is a very big State. If they can do that, then we will learn from them, not just at the State level but perhaps at the Federal level as well.

I think we will be funding projects—not just now but in the future, 20 years from now—through tooling. When I travel back to my native State of West Virginia, I go through West Virginia and I pay tolls. When I was a little kid and they first built the turnpike, we would have to stop and find change—whatever—stop every 5 or 10 miles. You don't do that anymore. We don't do that anymore in Delaware either, because we have—in Delaware and I think in West Virginia—highway-speed E-ZPass. It is an express E-ZPass. You go through, and it is charged to your credit card that you have already established when you establish your E-ZPass plan.

Also, we now have the technology that even if folks don't have an E-ZPass—in some tolling operations around the country, a person drives through in their vehicle, car, truck, van, whatever the system—when you go through the toll plaza, they don't collect a toll. They have a highly accurate camera with the ability to take pictures of the vehicle and great pictures of your license plates, and then they send a bill to the owner of that vehicle. So you don't even have to have high-speed E-ZPass. But a combination of those two, systems like E-ZPass and systems like the one I just described where people drive through with no E-ZPass or a similar system, but they actually get billed for it later on. They do not get billed and fined; they just get billed for it. If you don't pay it, then I am sure something will happen.

But I think 20 years from now we will have something that looks a lot like that. My guess is we will also have user fees, but not everybody likes tolling. As it turns out, Oregon has been working on road user charge, also known as vehicle miles traveled. They have been working on it for 10 years, and they have got 5,000 people in the plan. So this is not going to happen in 5 years or 10 years, but maybe 20 years for both a combination of tolling and vehicle miles traveled.

There is another idea out there that is used in some places around the country. It is called 3P or P3. When I first heard that, I thought they were talking about P–3 airplanes. I spent a lot of years of my life as a naval flight officer in P–3 aircraft. I used to command them, but they were not talking about airplanes when they were talking about P3. They were talking about public-private partnerships. We have some pretty good examples of where that is working. We can learn from those in different States. I think that can be part of the future. It ought to be.

Put the three of them together, is that a comprehensive plan? Not entirely, but it is pretty good approach. It is a heck of a lot better than what we have been doing: pension smoothing, increasing fees for TSA. Instead of improving aviation safety, we put the money in the transportation trust fund. Raising Customs fees—instead of putting the money in ways to make our borders most robust and so forth, we put some of that money in the transportation trust fund.

We sell oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—I think probably at a bad time to sell it, when the price is really low. They say: Buy low, sell high. Well, if we are going to sell petroleum out of the petroleum reserve—the price of oil is about as low right now as it has been in a long, long time.

I am told that—I don't know if it was last week or the week before—there are 10,000 gasoline stations across the country where they are selling gasoline for less than $2 a gallon. I don't know what they are charging in West Virginia, but I filled up my Chrysler Town and Country minivan, which has 403,000 miles on it, and I paid $2.15 a gallon. There are some places in Delaware where people are paying less and in neighboring New Jersey where they are paying less. But right now, it does not make much sense to sell oil out of our Strategic Petroleum Reserve. There are some people who want to and who want to use that money to go into the transportation trust fund. I think that is foolish. We have to be smarter than that.

I have another chart I want us to take a look at. I want to thank ''Vanna White'' here for putting up these charts. I will pay for that later. This chart talks about legislation—it is kind of ironic. That is S. 1994. I mentioned earlier how the last time we raised the Federal gasoline and diesel tax or fee was in 1993 when we raised it to 18 cents for gas and about 23, 24 cents for diesel. They have been there for 22 years.

One of the things I have done is introduce legislation, and I have done so with DICK DURBIN, who used to serve on the Bowles-Simpson Commission—remember the Bowles-Simpson Commission. I thought it was a great approach to figure out how to seriously address our Nation's deficit in a variety of ways. One of the ways that Bowles-Simpson said we should address our deficit situation—I will say our budget deficits are down—topped out, I think, in 2009 at $1.4 trillion. This year we are down about $400 billion. Is that an improvement? Yes, it is. Do we have some ways to go? We sure do.

What Bowles-Simpson suggested is that we raise the gas or diesel tax at the Federal level by a penny each quarter, a penny every 3 months for 15 quarters. So effectively you would be raising the gas or diesel tax by 3 or 4 cents a year for 4 years and index it going forward.

What Senator DURBIN and I have introduced is actually something quite similar to that, which a majority of the Bowles-Simpson Commission voted for. It is called the Traffic Relief Act. What it calls for is an annual 4 cent gas increase in gas and diesel. That would be for a total of about 4 years—4 cents a year for 4 years. After that, we would index those user fees, those taxes, to the rate of inflation. The rate of inflation is pretty low lately, so they would not go up very much if the rate of inflation stays where it is. If the rate of inflation rears its head again, then that would be different.

A fellow who was a member of my staff back in Wilmington, DE—when we introduced this bill, the price for gas at a station in the neighborhood where his family buys gas—in the space of 2 days, the price of gas either went up or went down by 13 cents. It went up in 2 days, 13 cents. As we know, the price of oil moves up and down all of the time.

My own belief is—and I have heard this from a lot of people—there are a lot of days or a lot of weeks where the price of gas or diesel goes up a lot more than 4 cents. Right now our world is not literally awash in oil but certainly figuratively awash in oil. One of the reasons the price at the pump for gas and diesel is so low—as I said earlier, a couple of weeks ago there were 10,000 gas stations across the country selling gas for less than two bucks a gallon. One of the reasons it is so low is because the United States is producing a lot more than we have for some time, and so are a bunch of other countries, including the OPEC nations.

With the approval of the Iran agreement, as the Iranians comply with the agreement—my hope is that they will comply in spirit and in letter, and then as a result of that, they will be in a position to begin selling. They have only been selling some of their oil products to customers, including I think India, maybe Japan, China, but they will be able to sell more products. A world that is already awash in oil is going to find that Iran, which I think has the fourth greatest oil reserves in the world, is going to be back in the market and selling their own products. I believe that will keep the prices from rising anytime soon. And I think there is reason to believe that the price at the pump, which is already quite low, might even go down further. Time will tell.

I have one last poster board here I wish to look at for just a moment.

Our legislation—this is a typo here. It says that it restores $240 billion for the highway trust fund. It is not $240 billion, it is $220 billion. Still, compared to what? Compared to nothing. Compared to doing nothing, it is a whole lot. If we had a status quo, any kind of a status quo increase—a highway bill or a transportation bill—we would use maybe half of that. So what we are talking about is double, just getting by, And we have such a backlog of work to do, that it doesn't make sense just to push enough money to these projects to get by.

This would provide roughly twice that amount of money and would maybe not raise our GDP by 1.5 percent, but it would sure raise it. It may not put 1.8 million people to work over the next year, but it would put a lot of people to work and people who like to do these jobs.

The money would fully fund the Federal highway and transit programs in our country. It would increase investments in upgrades and in repairs as well. It would do it in a way that doesn't drop a huge burden on users of these products—gasoline and diesel—all in one fell swoop. It is like 4 cents a year over 4 years. After 4 years, there will be a 16-cent increase.

People say: Well, what is that in terms of practical impact? What does that actually mean for somebody?

I am told that it is actually—I don't drink a lot of coffee, but my friends who do get a small coffee over in the Dirksen Building across the street. They pay $1.70, and if they get a medium-sized coffee, it is like $2.50, and a really big one is maybe a little bit over $3. This is not really fancy coffee but just a regular cup of coffee with cream and sugar, and the price is maybe $2 or $3. Literally for the price of a cup of coffee a week, for those of us who use roads, highways, bridges, who buy gas, who buy diesel, we could have a much better transportation system. This isn't $10 a week or $20 a week or $30 a week. That increase over 4 years—4 cents a year for 4 years—without the data for the average driver, that is about a cup of coffee a week. Is that too much to pay for roads, highways, bridges, and a good transit system? I don't think so.

There is an interest in offsetting some of these increases with a regressive tax, but there is an interest in offsetting some of that by making some tweaks like Michigan is going to do with their State earned-income tax credit with a Republican Governor and Republican legislature. I think there is maybe a lesson or something we can do there to help address the regressive nature of this tax.

I close by saying I come to this floor from time to time and I mention one of the things I love to do. I don't know if you ever do this, Madam President, but I love to ask people who have been married a long time ''What is the secret for being married for a long time?'' I have done it for years. I have asked this question of hundreds of people who are older folks who have been married 30 years, 40 years, 50 years, 60 years, 70 years. I ask them ''What is the secret?'' I get hilarious answers. I get some that are very poignant and others are just plain memorable for a lot of reasons. But the best answer I have ever gotten is there are two C's. What are the two C's? Communicate and compromise.

That is not only the secret for a vibrant marriage between two people, it is also the secret for a vibrant democracy, to communicate and compromise. I would add a third C, and that is to collaborate. What the American people said to us last November—whether they are Republicans, Democrats, or Independents—is that they want us to communicate, they want us to compromise, and they want us to collaborate, and we need to do that.

One idea I have not mentioned here bears mentioning. It was an idea that was endorsed last year by the administration and was endorsed last year by the immediate past chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, with whom our President served, Dave Camp. He retired earlier this year as a Congressman from Michigan, a very good person. What they proposed is international tax reform. What both Chairman Camp at the time and the administration said is that there are about $2 trillion in overseas profits of American companies. They are just keeping it over there and they are not that anxious to bring it back because they don't want to have to pay—I don't know—35 percent, 33 percent, 32 percent, 29 percent. They are looking for a lower tax break and then to bring it back when it makes sense.

The administration and Dave Camp said: Let's deem it repatriated.

The Treasury said: All right. You have money over there, American companies. Bring it back. It is going to be taxed at about 10 percent.

That was the proposal.

The administration said: American companies that have money over there, we want you to bring it back. You won't be taxed at 35 percent or 25 percent, but you will be taxed at about 14 percent.

That is an idea, and it is an interesting idea. It doesn't solve the problem forever. It provides one-time money—quite a bit of it—for roads, bridges, rail, and for airports as well. It doesn't solve the problem permanently, but it surely gives us a lot of money. Not every company likes that idea, and not everybody who serves here likes that idea, but it is a serious idea, and it is one that deserves a lot of consideration, and I hope we will do that.

Let me just say this. At the end of the day, if we come to the end of this calendar year—when we run out of money yet again for roads, highways, and bridges and we say ''Well, what are we going to do now?''—we will have not just the States I pointed out here in yellow and red that are bailing on projects, delaying and stopping them in some cases, we will have a lot more yellow and a whole lot more red on the map I had up earlier. What do we do about it? Do we just do what we have done for 5 years and kick the can down the road yet again and look for cats and dogs and wherever we can find a few bucks and sort of throw them at the problem for a while, not make a real committed effort? Frankly, we are not giving the voters in this country any reason to feel encouraged about our courage. I hope we don't do that.

If at the end of the day we don't do some kind of international tax reform, good ideas such as expanding tolling, vehicle miles traveled, and public-private partnerships—those are all good ideas, and I hope we grow them all. We are not going to have them all in place in the kind of scope we need by the end of this year.

If we find ourselves at a time and place where we run out of money, where the States are looking to us and we are running out of money at the Federal level—and the price of gas is two bucks a gallon at gas stations across America—my hope is people will say: You know, for the price of a cup of coffee, I could have good roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems again. For the price of a cup of coffee a week, I could have that. Forty cents a week, maybe.

Maybe that is not a bad deal for their family or for our country. I want people to think about that.

In the weeks to come, I am going to be talking a lot about this proposal. My hope is that as time goes buy, people will say—like my dad used to say in West Virginia when my sister and I were little kids growing up and they were in West Virginia—my dad used to say to my sister and me after we had done yet another boneheaded stunt: Just use some common sense. He said that a lot. He did not say it that nicely. But I think this may be an opportunity for us to use some of that common sense here, and I know he would approve, and at the end of the day, so would the voters of America.

There are a number of States that have actually done what I am talking about. They have raised their user fees, and in some cases they have phased them in over a couple of years. It is interesting what happened in the elections last year where the State legislators had voted to do that, where they raised the user fees in order to would pay for roads, highways, and bridges. Interestingly enough, the legislators who voted for that—Republicans—didn't get thrown out of office. Ninety-five percent of them were reelected. They won their primaries, they won their general elections, and they were reelected. The Democrats who voted for those modest user fees increases didn't get thrown out of office either. In the States that raised the money locally to make the improvements that were needed in transportation, 90 percent of the Democrats won their primaries and they won their general elections. They were reelected.

People want us to make hard choices here. They don't want us to continue to kid them or fool them; they want us to do the real thing. They want us to work together. They want us to get things done. They want us to strengthen our economic recovery, and this is not a bad way to do that.

With that, I see a great American from New Mexico has joined us. He is somebody who has worked with the Senator from Louisiana and the Senator who was just here before, Mr. INHOFE, the chairman of the EPW Committee, to try to find a good way for us to strengthen the economic recovery and at the same time to further clean our air, promote public health, and do good things for our public environment. I wish to say to TOM UDALL how proud I am to be his colleague and how much I appreciate his leadership position on a very important issue, an environmental law that hasn't been updated in almost 40 years and, frankly, doesn't work. It has never worked, and we need to do something about it. Under his leadership, along with our other two colleagues, my hope is that we will. I look forward to what he has to say.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

TSCA

Mr. UDALL. Madam President, thank you very much for the recognition.

I wish to say to Senator CARPER about TSCA that we have been working on—you were one of the early Senators who really cared about this issue. You were involved with it, and you helped it develop. Over time, we did a marvelous thing in terms of improving what Senator Frank Lautenberg had put on the table, bipartisan—he developed a lot of Republican and Democratic support—and you were a key player all the way through.

So we know—we think at this point, you and I believe—and we do a lot of visiting around on both sides of the aisle—that this is ready to go. We now have I think 53 cosponsors. We are developing more cosponsors every day, and we don't think there is any real hostility toward the bill in terms of wanting amendments that aren't relevant. That is a key factor for us, and both sides need to focus on that.

I would like to express my appreciation to you for what you have done on TSCA to help blend it into and make it into a bipartisan product. We have been trying—you know, it has been very busy with the Pope in town, with the sequester facing us and the shutdown and things such as that. We have been trying to get onto the floor to talk about this, and I think we are going to continue to do that in the future. But it is tremendously important that this gets some floor time now, and I know you have been working on that with me.

Do you see this as a product that is better than current law? I mean, my sense is it is much better than the current law.

Mr. CARPER. If I could respond to my friend, I have a friend who—when you ask him ''How are you doing?'' he says ''Compared to what?'' And when we talk about the legislation initially introduced by Senator Lautenberg, Senator VITTER, and now coauthored by you, Senator VITTER, and Senator INHOFE, with input from a number of us, I always say: Well, compared to what?

The idea here is to ensure that the EPA does its due diligence on toxic substances in this country. And there are thousands or tens of thousands of chemicals—you know better than I do—that exist in our environment—in our air, our ground, in water—tens of thousands. Are they all toxic? No. But my recollection—correct me if I am wrong in this, but I think that out of those thousands, tens of thousands, I believe the EPA in the last 38 years has actually done their due diligence on really fewer than 200, maybe even fewer than 10 when you get down to it, maybe even just 5.

And you say: How long has this bill been around, this law been around? Thirty-eight years. And they have now finished work on five highly toxic substances? If we can't do better than that, we ought to quit, and this is not the time to quit.

It is sort of like football. You take the kickoff, and you are in your own territory and you start marching down the field. You get into the other team's territory, get down to the 20-yard line, and you are in the red zone—not in the end zone, but you are in the red zone.

I think with your leadership and that of our colleagues, we are in the red zone. We need to bring this onto the floor with 53 cosponsors equally divided between Democrats and Republicans. There is a lot of interest in the House, and I think there is support from the administration. We ought to get this done.

Thank you.

Mr. UDALL. Madam President, it bears repeating. Senator CARPER is very modest, and he is a humble man, but he has done a lot to help bring us to this point. I think he is one of the Senators here who work the best across the aisle, and that is what has happened. We have had a lot of Senators who have wanted to work across the aisle on this bill. As Senator CARPER knows, on the Environment and Public Works Committee, he was joined by Senator BOOKER, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Senator MERKLEY in terms of helping to mark up the bill and make it a better product.

When the Senator talks about going across the finish line, with 53 cosponsors about evenly divided between Democrat and Republican—I think it is almost exactly even—that sends a signal to our majority leader that this has tremendous support in both caucuses. I believe the Presiding Officer here is on the bill. So everybody standing on the Senate floor right now is on what is a good, bipartisan product.

So we are going to work very carefully in the next couple of days to see that attention is brought to this, and hopefully we will have an opportunity to have a debate with amendments and then meet with the House. The House, as Senator CARPER knows, has already passed a piece of legislation, I think 378 to 1—1 person in the House opposing it. So we have a bill that is alive and ready to go, and we need to get it out

of the Senate so we can conference it with the House and get it to the President's desk for his signature.

I don't know if the Senator has any other thoughts on what is the best way to move forward. I mean, obviously we have to be bipartisan, but at this particular point, is it the Senator's sense we are ready to go, from everything he has seen from the Environment and Public Works Committee and these other Senators in various places? Is it ready to go?

Mr. CARPER. If I may respond to my colleague's question, I don't care if the majority leader is a Republican or a Democrat—they are always trying to figure out how do we have time on the calendar to get this stuff done. They are always looking at ways. And one of the best ways to ensure legislation actually fits into a reasonably small period of time is to line up bipartisan support.

I tell my colleague, I have been here in the Senate for a while, and this is almost a picture-book way to pass legislation: Work it up through the grassroots—Democratic Lautenberg and Republican VITTER and now with your role and others. There are not many bills in the Senate that have 26 or 27 Democrats and an equal number of Republicans.

Has everything been worked out? No. Is there a need for amendments? Yes. Is there a need for a filibuster? No. We should bring it to the floor.

I think we should go to the majority leader and visit with him early and often and continue to remind him. And those who believe in this, whether they happen to be on the environmental side or happen to be folks in the health care arena or maybe on the manufacturing side—and we thank those who have helped us draft this—we ask for them not to be silent about it but to urge not just us but the leadership to find time—a couple of days—to bring this bill to the floor and just get it done.

With that, I say to my colleague and the Presiding Officer, if I put down my microphone and pack up my bag, I can have dinner with my wife in the First State of Delaware, and that is my goal. So I will bid you adieu.

Mr. UDALL. I thank the Senator. I wish you Godspeed on that train headed to Wilmington because you have a wonderful wife.

Mr. CARPER. Well, it is not the last train to Clarksville, but it is the next train to Wilmington.

Mr. UDALL. And let me say again that not only on TSCA, as Senator CARPER held, we were going to have speeches earlier in the week, but we were unable, with some of the scheduling issues and everything, to get down here and talk as a group. We had Senator WHITEHOUSE, who was going to come down, and Senator MERKLEY was going to come down, as well as several of the key members of the Environment and Public Works Committee who played such a big role in terms of moving this bill forward.

The person who really kicked this off was Senator Frank Lautenberg. What a star in terms of bipartisanship. I remember working with him when I was on the Environment and Public Works Committee for a long period of time on a very substantive piece of legislation. It was so good, we couldn't find much bipartisanship on it, and he understood that. It got out of the committee. It wasn't ready for prime time here on the floor, and so what we ended up doing was saying we need to go back to square one. Senator Lautenberg took that very seriously. He met with Senator VITTER. Senator MANCHIN played a role in that, and Senator MANCHIN was one of the ones who were going to come to the floor to talk, and he played a role in getting them together. As a result, a bipartisan bill came out in the last Congress. That has continued now for almost 2½ years, and it is a very good product.

Madam President, the American people want a government that works, not one that shuts down to send a message. They want a Congress that moves the Nation forward, not one that grinds to a halt. They want a responsible budget that supports working families and strengthens our economy and creates jobs. These should be our priorities, not an attack on women's health care.

I understand some people have strong views about a woman's right to choose that are different from mine. There are strong differences of opinion on many important issues in this Senate and in the Congress—health care, energy, climate change, foreign policy. We could make a very long list.

I read an insightful quote the other day from my good friend Republican Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER. Senator ALEXANDER said: ''If we had a shutdown every time we had a dispute over a contentious issue, the government would never open.'' I think that is a very wise observation. We do have many differences, but, most importantly, we must have the broader national interest in mind.

The clock is ticking. Funding runs out in just a few days. We need a clean continuing resolution, and we need it now—a temporary funding bill just to keep the lights on.

Have we forgotten what happened 2 years ago? The people of my home State of New Mexico have not forgotten. We were badly hurt by the shutdown then, and we would be badly hurt by a shutdown now.

In Los Alamos and Sandia, our two DOE labs are working on modernizing aging nuclear weapons systems to keep them safe and secure. It is foolish to cause unnecessary disruption to projects of this significance where there is no margin for error. Each of these labs employs thousands of people, many of them scientists at the top of their field. Why would we threaten their paychecks and the important national security work they are doing?

We have three Air Force bases in New Mexico—Cannon, Kirtland, and Holloman—all serving a variety of unique national security missions for our country. White Sands Missile Range, unlike any facility in the country, provides critical research and testing for future technologies. Shutdowns and sequestration send a terrible message to the men and women at these facilities. It limits their effectiveness and harms the economies in nearby communities, such as Clovis, Albuquerque, Alamogordo, and Dona Ana County.

Shutdowns mean lost jobs and lost revenue, all in the face of a struggling economy. We cannot afford another government shutdown, and we cannot afford a return to sequester cuts. These are bad choices. These are self-inflicted wounds.

A clean CR will keep the government open, but we need a long-term cure. We need a bipartisan budget agreement—one that makes smart investments and meets the real needs of American families.

The people of my State work hard. Many are still struggling. The economy of New Mexico has not yet recovered completely from the recession. We know New Mexicans want us to come together and push for a stronger recovery. New Mexicans are eager for solutions, and they are tired of these political games that threaten jobs and weaken our economy. Yet here we are once again facing a manufactured crisis.

We all know that in fiscal year 2016, which begins next week, the Murray-Ryan budget deal will expire and we will be left with a return to sequestration.

As ranking member of the interior subcommittee on the Committee on Appropriations, I would like to talk about that today because the impacts of the funding levels required by the Budget Control Act are clear and they are very destructive. Just look at the Senate Interior appropriations bill reported out of the committee in June. To stay within the spending limits we faced under sequestration, it slashes more than $2 billion from the President's budget request. That means it doesn't provide enough funding for basic water infrastructure or to protect our public lands or to fulfill our trust responsibility to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

I know my chairman, Senator MURKOWSKI, did the very best she could with the allocation she was given, but here is the reality: The Budget Control Act caps don't meet the needs of our Nation. They fail critical programs. They fail our communities in New Mexico and nationwide.

Our Nation faces an infrastructure crisis. Yet the Senate bill cuts grants to States for water and sewer infrastructure by more than $500 million below fiscal year 2015 levels.

Actions have consequences, and here are the consequences of the Senate bill: Some 230 communities will not have their water projects funded, 14,000 construction jobs will not be created, and

$1 billion in matching and leveraged funds from State partners will be lost.

The Senate bill also shortchanges the National Park Service with $318 million less than the President requested. That means 1,000 fewer park rangers. That means $150 million less to maintain our national parks even though the Service will celebrate its centennial in 2016 and will host a record number of visitors at national parks nationwide.

We have 15 national parks in New Mexico, including our newest national park, the Valles Caldera National Preserve. These parks and other public lands in my State are critical not only for conservation but for our economy. A shutdown would be a disaster; sequestration is just a slower moving disaster. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Bandelier National Monument, Tent Rocks National Monument, Bosque Del Apache Wildlife Refuge, and many other sites are key economic assets. These sites help grow jobs, they help communities grow, and they are great conservation assets in communities across the country. We cannot keep asking them to do more and more on less. Yet, without a sensible budget, that is exactly where we are headed in New Mexico and across the Nation.

The Senate Interior appropriations bill also cuts more than $300 million from the President's request for the Indian Health Service. We have a solemn trust responsibility to Native Americans, and we are failing. Again, these are not just numbers. The impact is very real and very painful. It means the Indian Health Service will fund 20,000 fewer doctor visits in 2016 and nearly 1,000 fewer hospital stays. It means falling further behind. We need a responsible budget to meet our obligation to the Indian Health Service and other tribal programs, such as housing, school construction, Indian education. All of those are being hurt by this sequestration budget.

We cannot continue being shortsighted. We can't keep shortchanging programs that make a real difference in the lives of all Americans. This includes art and cultural programs, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and funding for our national forests and wildlife refuges. And the list goes on and on. The time is now, and we are running out of time. We are on the wrong train, on the wrong track, and going nowhere.

Fortunately, there is a solution. Let's pass a clean CR, and let's work together to pass a budget that actually meets the needs of our Nation, with sensible funding levels for defense and nondefense programs alike.

Before I wrap up my remarks, I wish to call attention to another deadline that is fast approaching. The authorization for the Land and Water Conservation Fund will expire on September 30 if this Congress doesn't act. Recently, I was one of 53 Members who called on the leadership of this Chamber to pass an extension of the law, and I want to reiterate that call today. The Land and Water Conservation Fund just celebrated its 50th birthday. It enjoys strong bipartisan support because the idea behind it is so simple and so powerful. When this Nation develops one natural resource—our oil and gas reserves—we invest some of the proceeds in other critical conservation priorities.

For five decades now, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has protected our national parks, forests, and other public lands. It helps ensure hunting, fishing, and recreational access, and it improves and expands our local parks and recreation facilities. The program has been a tremendous success and has had a tremendous impact on my State, from urban refuges—such as the Valle de Oro—to wide open preserves such as the Valles Caldera. It provides crucial funding to preserve open spaces, strengthen the economy, and enhance our way of life.

LWCF allows us to leverage today's resources to protect vital lands and waters for future generations. Allowing the law to expire breaks that compact. It doesn't make any sense, and it doesn't have to happen. We shouldn't let the Land and Water Conservation Fund expire, even for a single day. I call on this Chamber to act swiftly to permanently authorize this important program and ensure that it is fully funded.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, those of us who believe in protecting innocent and precious life may have lost a vote today, but we are steadily winning a larger argument—a critical argument that goes to the heart of who we want to be as a society. We can feel momentum for life on the rise just as we see extremism on the other side increasing. By placing their allegiance with the far left instead of women, Democrats are making a losing bet they will come to regret over the long term.

Today, however, we must grapple with the challenges of the present. Democrats' insistence on blocking the strategy pursued today means we have to consider the options now before us. The reality is that the government will shut down next week if Congress does not act.

The president of Right to Life said to those of us who believe in protecting life:

> There are two different roads we can take. One is to insist that no more money go to Planned Parenthood and cause a government shutdown (which won't result in actually defunding Planned Parenthood). The other is to take a slightly longer-term approach, taking advantage of the fact that we have the attention of the country as probably never before. . . . Every well-informed pro-lifer wants to defund Planned Parenthood. I want to defund Planned Parenthood. There are wonderful pro-life men and women in Congress who want to defund Planned Parenthood. And, certainly National Right to Life wants to defund Planned Parenthood. The difference here is in strategy.

This is not the end of this debate or this discussion.

I urge colleagues to join me in supporting the legislation I am about to file which would ensure that the government remains open.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House which was received earlier today.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

> *Resolved,* That the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 719) entitled ''An Act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes,'', with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 2689

(Purpose: Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.)

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719, with further amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

> The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. MCCONNELL] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 719 with an amendment numbered 2689.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 2690 TO AMENDMENT NO. 2689

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.