

We have received word that the House Speaker is going to resign. Why? He is resigning because everyone knows he cannot deal with the people he has to deal with in the House. He has tried very hard, and it hasn't worked.

I would hope my friend the Republican leader would start talking reality, not come in and boast about how great the country is doing under Republican leadership. We have gotten nothing done under the Republican leadership.

I am reminded of what Albert Einstein said when he defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. That is what we have been doing here. We have votes on everything, everyone knowing what the results are going to be. The latest episode was—what a waste of our time—we had a vote here to defund Planned Parenthood. It didn't even get a majority of the Republicans—well, it got a majority of the Republicans; it certainly didn't get a majority of the Senate. It didn't get a majority of the Senate and certainly didn't get 60 votes, which they were trying to do—revoting on things, always knowing the results are going to be the same. It appears that Albert Einstein had a few organizations in mind when he gave this definition of “insanity,” and one of them, as he looked forward, would be this Republican Senate we have.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JAMES BILLINGTON

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the original Hall of Representatives, which is now called National Statuary Hall, there is a beautiful clock that stands over the Chamber's doorway. The clock and its adjoining sculpture depict Clio, the Greek muse of history, watching over the House of Representatives. The meaning of the clock and statue are clear: History will bear witness to all we do in Congress.

For the last 28 years—almost three decades—James Billington has served as the Librarian of Congress. He has been our Clio, ensuring that the annals of American history are complete and available to everyone.

Dr. Billington came to the Library of Congress in 1987. What a remarkable résumé—valedictorian at Princeton University, a Rhodes Scholar, and he earned his doctorate from Oxford College. Following his graduation from Oxford, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. After his service in the Army, he taught history—first at Harvard and then at Princeton—for 16 years. During that time Dr. Billington became one of the foremost scholars of Russia.

I had the good fortune of being able to travel with Dr. Billington to the Soviet Union. It was like having an encyclopedia with you. It was wonderful to travel to this country with which we had been involved in a Cold War for so many years and to have a scholar with us to give us insight everywhere we

went and on everybody we talked to. He has written a number of important scholarly works on Russian history, culture, and politics.

In 1973 James Billington came to Washington, DC, to lead the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a prestigious organization. As director, he founded the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies. He served as their director for 14 years before coming over here to become the director of the Library of Congress.

Dr. Billington has done extraordinary work during his tenure at the Library of Congress. He has brought the Library into the 21st century. Dr. Billington doubled the size of the Library's analog collections from 85 million to 160 million. He oversaw the creation of the Library of Congress's online portal, making hundreds of millions of documents, books, and materials available to the American public.

Using his relationship with Russian scholars, Dr. Billington founded the Open World Leadership Forum. This important forum creates dialogue and cultural exchanges between U.S. and Russian leaders. James Billington has accompanied 10 congressional delegations to Russia. I was fortunate to be on one of them, as I just said. In June 1988, he accompanied the President and Mrs. Reagan to the Soviet summit in Moscow, and I am confident President Reagan and his staff depended on James Billington's outstanding mind.

Dr. Billington helped establish the congressionally mandated Veterans History Project, which collects and preserves first-person accounts from U.S. veterans dating back to World War I. Dr. Billington helped create the National Book Festival, which brings thousands of authors and readers to the National Mall every year.

In every way imaginable, Dr. James Billington has made the Library of Congress and, by extension, the United States better—a better library, a better country. As he embarks on a well-deserved retirement after 28 years of exemplary service, I wish him the very best. I have no doubt Dr. Billington will enjoy time with his wife Marjorie—a lovely woman I have come to know and admire greatly—and their 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

James Billington, thank you for a job well done. We will all miss you.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have never been a sentimental person—I have never tried to be one—but today I can't help but think back to a time when keeping the government open and funded wasn't a last-minute exercise. Looking at the clock now, we are almost 14 hours away from what could have been another Republican shutdown of the Federal Government. This kind of brinkmanship is totally unnecessary. Although we will likely avert a shutdown tonight, Republicans brought us dangerously close to a shutdown.

This continuing resolution only funds our government through December 11, as I said earlier. That means that within the coming weeks, we need to negotiate with Republicans to keep our government open.

Yesterday Senator McCONNELL finally took Democrats up on our call to begin budget negotiations. I welcome that, and I welcome Senator McCONNELL to the table. We should have started this process months ago, but better late than never, so I am pleased he has come around.

Lifting the sequester has been one of my top priorities for years, and I am hopeful that we can finally achieve this key Democratic goal. Just take what it has done in the past—just take one entity. The National Institutes of Health lost almost \$2 billion and they have never gotten it back. It has been devastating to the most prestigious, important medical research facility in the world. That is what sequestration did.

This time around, we have to do better than just keeping the Federal Government operating by a continuing resolution. We have to stop devastating sequester cuts from hitting our military and our middle class. Even the Republican leader agrees, it appears, because a week or 10 days ago he said: “We are inevitably going to end up in negotiations that will crack the Budget Control Act once again.” And I say hallelujah.

Here we are, ready to negotiate months before the December 11 deadline. After all, that was the original intent of sequestration—to force Democrats and Republicans to the negotiating table. That should be easy to do. We hate sequestration, and I know there are a significant number of Republicans who don't like it. I have heard Senator GRAHAM, and I have heard Senator McCAIN give speeches in committees and publicly about how terrible it is. So let's get rid of it for the good of the country. This is a so-called no-brainer.

Let's work together—not in December—to repeal the sequester caps, but let's work now to repeal the caps and build a long-term, bipartisan funding bill. Then we can turn our attention to the other matters that deserve our immediate attention, such as the debt ceiling.

We can't put off the debt ceiling much longer. I don't know the exact date when we are going to run out of money, but I am sure it is going to be sometime before Thanksgiving. We all know that in a matter of weeks, unless we act, the United States will lose its ability to pay its bills. And if you think shutting the government down is bad, which I do, that pales in comparison to the government of the United States defaulting on all of our debts. The consequences would be dire and the fallout would be felt around the world.

We also need to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. It is closed. Republicans made a terrible mistake by allowing the Bank's charter to expire, jeopardizing hundreds of thousands of American jobs. Congress must also craft a long-term highway bill to ensure the highway trust fund will be solvent for years to come.

We have a lot to do in the coming weeks and months, and we certainly don't have time for any more manufactured crises. So I sincerely hope the Republican leadership will instead choose to do what is right to meet our country's obligations.

Would the Chair tell us what we are going to do the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 719, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 719, an act to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with McConnell (for Cochran) amendment No. 2689, making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016.

McConnell amendment No. 2690 (to amendment No. 2689), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two managers or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to speak to the vote we are about to cast this morning at 10 o'clock. This is a vote to basically extend the authority and budget of the Federal Government until December 11. This September 30 is the end of our fiscal year, and at least legally, the authority to continue the government depends on budget and appropriations bills being passed by the House and Senate. That has not happened. So what we are doing is a continuing resolution. It basically extends last year's budget until December 11.

Now, that will keep the lights on at Federal agencies, and it will avoid the catastrophic outcome of a government shutdown, but it is not good policy. We have done it on our side—on the Democratic side—and now the Republicans, in control of the Congress, are doing it on their side. It buys time to reach

some sort of agreement that is longer lasting and more thoughtful.

We know the notion of a government shutdown is a disaster, but it is not a unanimous opinion in the Senate or in the House of Representatives. There are actually Members of the Senate and the House who are applauding the possibility of a government shutdown. Some of them were the same people who inspired the shutdown several years ago—a shutdown which cost us 800,000 jobs in America because of the uncertainty created by it and which created real hardship for people around our country. A shutdown, if it happened again in this context, would be even more serious in terms of its impact on the American economy.

So we have a chance. And I would just say to those who follow this debate—and there is no reason why people would follow the minutiae—that in June of this year we asked on the Democratic side for the Republican leader to sit down and avoid this actual confrontation we are having today. We asked Senator MCCONNELL and Speaker BOEHNER to negotiate with the President a new budget—a budget that is realistic and will not harm innocent people.

I am troubled by the notion that Republicans have that we should find war funds to continue funding the Department of Defense and ignore the non-defense parts of the budget. Senator REID made reference to one. National Institutes of Health medical research, which is critical to America and its future, is now facing the uncertainty of no budget, and that is unfair.

Last night we had a meeting with some of the major medical researchers in the United States, and they said it is hard to convince the next generation of researchers that we as a nation are seriously committed, and it is because of this uncertainty in budgeting. It is a political problem, and one that should be solved by politicians, namely, Members of the House and Senate working with the President.

So we will likely vote—and I certainly will vote in the next few minutes—to extend the operations of the government until December 11. But if it is only for more speechifying and breast-beating by those who want to shut down the government to prove some political point, I have to say they are seriously mistaken. It is the wrong thing for America to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for job creation to shut down the government. It is the wrong thing for our future, when it comes to medical research, education, and critical programs, to shut down the government. Those who are preaching that gospel should be reminded that 3 out of 4 Americans think they are not very thoughtful—I will clean up my words a little bit—not very thoughtful in using this approach.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this continuing resolution but really to light a fire

under the leadership in the Democratic and Republican precincts and to come together in the House and Senate in the next few weeks of this continuing resolution. Let's make sure we have a budget and one that is befitting a great nation.

I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we are voting on a clean, short-term continuous funding resolution, CR. Passing this legislation means no government shutdown. There may be some drama, but we intend to keep the government open and avoid shutdown, slowdown politics.

Shutdowns are bad for everyone. Shutdowns create uncertainty which slows economic growth, hurts the health and well-being of the entire Nation, and causes the loss of private sector jobs. Shutdowns make it impossible for Federal agencies to meet missions that serve the American people.

Let's show the American people we can work across the aisle and across the dome to get the job done.

Avoiding a shutdown is just the first step. Next, we need a budget deal to cancel sequester. Right now, our budget caps spending, but doesn't cap tax breaks for billionaires and corporations that send jobs overseas.

Americans are angry. They feel like the rules are rigged against them and that those who write the rules don't care.

Let's show them this Congress cares. The people deserve a government on their side.

That is why I am fighting to make sure they have a government that works as hard as they do. After we pass the bill to fund the government, we can move on to a new budget deal that cancels sequester, raising the caps equally for defense and nondefense domestic spending.

The budget deal will give us a framework for an omnibus funding bill that invests in America, protecting national security, rebuilding our physical infrastructure, creating jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow, and meeting our compelling human needs. The Appropriations Committee needs 30 days to get the job done after a new budget deal is passed.

I challenge leadership to work with Speaker BOEHNER to enact a new topline budget deal by the end of October. We can't let October brinksmanship become a Christmas crisis.

It is clear we need to cancel sequester. And it is clear that the 2013 shutdown was a disaster for everyone—not to be repeated.

This bill provides the resources to keep our government open so agencies can continue to serve the American people, keeping us safe, healthy, educated, moving, and thriving.

The bottom line is we need a new topline. With a new budget deal we get a new topline to invest in America's safety and future.

But we need to pass this short-term CR to get to a deal and not to another shutdown.