

home is twice the size of the 1,200-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment they rented in nearby Bellevue.

The Stolls customized almost every feature and finish, including hinges on kitchen cabinets that prevent the doors from slamming shut. “I’m typically the kind of consumer where I make a quick decision,” Mr. Stoll said. “But when it comes to your home, well, we stared at 100 countertops for an hour.”

The Stolls survived the recession and have prospered. Mr. Stoll purchased a Seattle condominium in 2008, the day before learning he was losing his job at Washington Mutual, the thrift sold to J.P. Morgan after it was seized by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.

Mr. Stoll changed jobs twice before he was recruited in 2011 to work at a technology company. He broke even on the sale of his condo last year. “Other people encountered problems where maybe it’s student loans or credit cards or car payments,” he said, “and we have none of that.”

The couple put 20% down on their new home, which cost \$579,000. Ms. Stoll works as a client associate for a large financial services company.

Growth in new home sales this year will depend, in part, on whether builders revive their interest in first-time buyers.

Two years ago, D.R. Horton Inc., the nation’s largest home builder, launched Emerald Homes, a luxury division. Last year, the company rolled out Express Homes, a division that pioneered no-frills housing for the entry-level market. Mr. Krivanec, Quadrant’s CEO, said he doesn’t see a return to his company’s former model. There are enough people with good-paying jobs in the area—at Boeing, Amazon and Microsoft—to keep sales going, even if it means building fewer homes. “We like where we’re at,” he said.

Mr. SANDERS. So what we are hearing—basically what this article tells us—is if people’s income is going down, they are not going to Macy’s, they are not going to Target. Those stores are not hiring workers or are getting rid of workers because the middle class does not have the income it needs.

Here is a very important point. Within President Obama’s recent budget—by the way, I think the President’s budget is beginning to move us in the right direction—there was a very interesting projection that unfortunately got very little attention. Here is the point: Over the last 50 years GDP growth in the United States of America averaged about 3.2 percent. What the President’s budget is suggesting is that more or less over the next 10 years we are going to see 3-percent growth, 3-percent—2.7, 2.5, 2.3. For the rest of the decade, 2.3 percent.

The bottom line is, if we continue along the same type of economic growth we have had over the previous 50 years, unemployment would be substantially lower, people would be paying more taxes, Social Security, among other programs, would be in much stronger shape.

The debate we are going to be having in the Budget Committee—I am the ranking member of the Budget Committee—are two very different philosophies. Our Republican friends believe in more austerity for the middle class and working families. Their goal, over a period of months and years, is to cut

Social Security, cut Medicare, cut Medicaid, cut nutrition programs for hungry children, not invest in infrastructure, and then give huge tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

In other words, more austerity for the middle class, tax breaks for the wealthy and large corporations. I believe that philosophy is wrong for many reasons, the most important being that if we want to grow the overall economy, if we want to create jobs, we have to put money into the hands of working people. We do not do that by cutting, cutting, cutting, and imposing more austerity on people who already desperately are hurting.

A far more sensible approach is to create the millions of jobs that our country desperately needs by, among other things, investing heavily in our crumbling infrastructure. Last week I introduced legislation that would invest \$1 trillion over a 5-year period into rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges, rail, airports, water systems, wastewater plants.

If we do that, we make our country more productive, safer, and create up to 13 million jobs, putting money into the hands of working people. It not only will improve their lives, but they will then go out and spend their money in their communities, creating further economic growth. That is the direction we should be going.

We also have to raise wages. People cannot survive on the starvation minimum wage imposed at the Federal level of \$7.25 an hour. If we raise the minimum wage over a period of years to \$15 an hour, we are going to have billions of dollars go into the hands of people who need it the most, improve their lives, allow them to go out and invest in our economy, spend money and create jobs.

We need pay equity for women workers. It is not acceptable that women are making 78 cents to the dollar for men who are doing the same work. We need to address the scandal of overtime right now, where we have so-called supervisors at McDonald’s who work 50, 60 hours a week, but because they are so-called supervisors do not get time and a half.

We need to make college affordable for all of our workers. In a global economy we need the best educated workforce in the world, not the one where people cannot afford a higher education. We need trade policies that benefit working people and not just large multinational corporations, which is why we should defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

So there is a lot of work that needs to be done. But the bottom line is, if we are serious about dealing with the deficit and debt reduction, if we are serious about growing the middle class, we need an agenda which creates jobs, raises wages, makes college affordable, demands that corporate America start investing in this country and not in China.

We need a proworker agenda, not an austerity agenda which will strangle the middle class of this country even more than it is hurting today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Vermont for what he has said. I would note that there are many in our State who agree wholeheartedly. We are not a wealthy State. We are a proud State. We are not a State that believes in such a huge disparity of income. So I thank the Senator for what he said, not only here but when he has made similar remarks around the country.

(The remarks of Mr. LEAHY pertaining to the introduction of S. 356 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday our friends across the aisle blocked—filibustered, really—a \$40 billion funding bill that would have paid the funds necessary to keep the Department of Homeland Security running through the rest of this fiscal year. I understand they had some differences over the content of the legislation the House passed, but it is undeniable that the House acted responsibly by passing this appropriations bill, particularly at a time of heightened security concerns not only here at home but around the world.

Of course, the part that I guess confused me the most is our Democratic friends said: Well, we don’t want to debate the bill, but what we want is a clean DHS appropriations bill. So they wanted to get to the end of the process without even starting the process, which strikes me as odd.

As I pointed out last week during the Senate debate on the Keystone XL Pipeline, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, the assistant minority leader, spoke very sincerely in support of a process surrounding that bill. We didn’t all agree that the Keystone Pipeline should be passed, but we did at least have an open amendment process that allowed everyone to express their point of view and to get votes on amendments, up or down, before concluding that piece of legislation. I think the most notable part of that was that we actually had more votes in the Senate during the 3 weeks we were on the Keystone XL Pipeline than we had all of last year under the previous management.

So it was amazing to me to see that the Democratic leadership—the Senate minority—worked so hard to marshal their caucus together to block debate on this \$40 billion appropriations bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, especially considering the

promise of the Senator from Illinois to continue to work with us to foster an open debate process and an open opportunity on both sides of the aisle to offer good ideas and to put them up for a vote on how to improve legislation.

It was also amazing to see this outcome considering what so many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle said last fall when the President made his Executive action on immigration.

As I said yesterday—and I want to repeat it again—we are not upset with people who are seeking a better life in the United States. All we are asking for is a legal process. We are very upset with the President violating his oath of office and purporting to make unconstitutional Executive orders. That is the problem. That is what the House is focused on like a laser.

In fact, this President's actions were a stunning display of Executive overreach. You don't have to take my word for it; take his word for it—at least the first 22 times he talked about it. He said he didn't have the authority to do it 22 different times.

Then there is the view of some of our colleagues in the minority. For example, the senior Senator from West Virginia put it simply last November when he expressed, I think, the feeling of a lot of Democrats when he said, "I wish he wouldn't do it."

This was echoed also in a very straightforward manner by the very junior Senator from Minnesota, who said, "I have concerns about executive action." Of course, it is easy to understand why because this is a uniquely legislative responsibility. The President doesn't have authority to make laws on his own—at least that used to be his position.

Then the senior Senator from Missouri said of the President's unilateral action: "How this is coming about makes me uncomfortable, [and] I think it probably makes most Missourians uncomfortable." Well, the public opinion polls I have seen bear that comment out, that while many people think we do need to fix our broken immigration system, the majority of people in the public opinion polls I have seen disagree with the way the President has tried to act by doing this unilaterally—or purporting to do it unilaterally.

Well, I have good news for Senator McCASKILL, Senator FRANKEN, and Senator MANCHIN. The House of Representatives has actually passed a piece of legislation that addresses their concerns and should give them some comfort.

The legislation on which we are trying to open debate fully funds, as I said, the Department of Homeland Security while reining in the President's unconstitutional actions. This is one of the tools available to Congress—using these legislative riders on appropriations to in effect express disapproval and defund certain acts by the Executive. That is one of the tools we have available to us.

I will renew my request from yesterday to Senator REID, the Democratic leader, and ask the assistant minority leader to honor his commitment that he made when we were debating the Keystone XL Pipeline. Please work with us to achieve at least debate on the floor, if not some significant legislation. But to just throw a fit and say "We refuse to even start debate on the legislation" strikes me as more of a political move than a legislative solution.

So I would ask my friends on the other side of the aisle, who so boldly stood up to express their concerns with the President's Executive actions only a few short months ago, to again stand up—this time to their own leadership—and to join us in reining in the President's Executive overreach and to not hold hostage the \$40 billion the House has appropriated to help fund the Department of Homeland Security through the end of the fiscal year, through September 31.

If there are parts of the House bill you don't like—and there are parts of the House bill that I have concerns over and that I hope we have a chance to vote on, but that is the way the House and the Senate are supposed to relate to one another. The House passes legislation, the Senate passes legislation, and if they are different, then they get reconciled in a conference committee or through a ping-pong back-and-forth before they go to the President. But to throw a fit and say "We refuse to do our job of legislating" just because they don't like where we are starting is extraordinarily counterproductive and is an unfortunate return to the dysfunction I believe the voters repudiated in their vote on November 4. So we will see whether there is a different point of view.

I know the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL, will come back to the floor and ask to reconsider the vote from yesterday, and so there will be another opportunity for our friends across the aisle to reconsider their vote blocking even beginning considering this legislation. I hope they will reconsider and join us and try to come up with a consensus solution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I wish to follow up on what the majority whip has been talking about.

Clearly the country is and should be concerned by the President's unilateral Executive action on immigration. He announced this action on November 20 of last year. The majority whip has already gone down that list of a number of our colleagues on the other side who said this is the wrong way to do this. The House happens to agree. In fact, the House of Representatives has passed legislation that agrees that this is the wrong way to do it and try to come up with a remedy.

Frankly, there is a better remedy. We are not going to find that better

remedy if we don't have a debate. We are not going to find that better remedy if we don't come to the floor and say: Here is how we think that bill should be changed.

The action taken last November by the President was clearly Executive overreach. It was an affront, I believe, to the rule of law, and it was an affront to the Constitution. Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution states that the President "shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed." That is the end of the quote right out of the Constitution. It couldn't be clearer—"shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed."

That is why we call the President the Executive. The President's job is not to make the law. The President's job is not to rule as a court would on the law. The President's job is to execute the law. The question here is: Does the law matter or not? The question here is: What do we do when the House of Representatives has passed a spending bill that would allow the funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the rest of the fiscal year—between now and September 30—which does try to stop President Obama's Executive amnesty plan?

It appears, if you can believe what you read that people have said, that a substantial majority of the Senate agrees the President shouldn't have done what he did. So what is our obligation to try to undo that? The House has done their part by sending a bill over that does that.

The President himself said 22 times that he didn't have the authority to do what he eventually did. I guess this is one case where I agree with the President 22 times. So if anybody is thinking I don't agree with the President, here are 22 times I agree with the President—the 22 times he said he couldn't do what he eventually decided to do. And what was that? The President said he can't unilaterally change the country's immigration laws.

The President didn't have that authority the 22 times he said he didn't have that authority. He didn't have that authority on November 20, 2014, when he took actions that clearly were designed not to enforce the law, and he doesn't have that authority now. So the House sent a bill over that tries to clarify that the President doesn't have that authority; that the legislative branch of the Federal Government is the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States. It is not whoever gets to act last.

Occasionally, the President will say: I am going to take Executive action if the Congress doesn't do its job. Well, the key point there is that it is the job of the Congress to pass laws, not the job of the President. If the President wants to repeal the law, if the President wants to change the law, nobody is in a better position than the President of the United States to encourage the Congress and the country to do

that. But that doesn't mean the President has the default option, if the Congress doesn't act by some certain date, to just do it himself. That is not in the Constitution. The President is not going to find it there.

I continue to believe the House-passed Department of Homeland Security funding bill is the way to send a message to the President that he can't act unilaterally; that there is a constitutional way to do this. I have not given up on winning over six Democrats in the Senate. Everybody understands the importance of 60 votes in the Senate. There are 54 Republicans, not 60, but there are more than six Democrats who have said they didn't agree with what the President did. I think in all cases they have said they agree with the funding levels or they would vote for the funding levels for the Department of Homeland Security. It seems to me those two things come together pretty nicely here. They get a chance, by debating this bill, to undo what the President did and to fund the Department of Homeland Security. So there are at least six Democrats who have said those are two different things they are for, and this is a case where we get to do that.

We need to pass this House measure that ensures spending at an important time with critical needs of homeland security, but it also would stop the President's illegal amnesty. We should not let that stand. We don't know where these legislative fights will wind up until we have them. Maybe that is why no Democrat yesterday was willing to have this debate, because maybe they do not know what happens if attention is called to the past positions they have had or the need to fund the Department of Homeland Security. But we don't know how these legislative battles work out if we don't have them. I think we need to have this one.

Leader McCONNELL said our first choice is to try to pass the House bill. If the law shouldn't be followed, then advocate that it be repealed, advocate that it be changed, but don't advocate that it be ignored. The ignore clause of the Constitution doesn't exist. There is no ability of the Executive to do that.

The United States is a nation founded on the rule of law. With every trade agreement we enter into, with all our relationships with other countries, and with people who come here, we talk about this being a country where you can look at the law and rely on the law itself—no matter what your status. The President is to take care that the laws are faithfully executed. Yet President Obama repeatedly has found ways to circumvent the Congress by picking and choosing which laws he wants to enforce.

Take the case of the overwhelmingly complicated health care law, where the President is picking and choosing what dates the law is to be complied with, even though the law often has very clear other dates. The President said: Well, I think there is a better date.

This is a bill of which the President was a major advocate. He had a chance to put the dates in there and didn't.

I recently reintroduced the ENFORCE the Law Act to ensure the President can't just continue to blatantly not do what the law says has to be done. This is a bill I introduced in the last Congress, where it passed the House with a bipartisan vote, but we weren't allowed to vote on it in the Senate. Apparently, there are a number of my colleagues who think that not only are we no longer allowed to vote on bills, but now it is even a bad idea if we debate a bill. That is what the vote was yesterday—to debate the bill. It wasn't approving anything except to debate the bill. That is what we should be moving towards now so we can fund this part of the government. The President complicated the funding of this agency with his action last November.

The ENFORCE the Law Act permits the Congress, if the Congress believes the President isn't enforcing the law, to go to court—not to wait months and years for an aggrieved citizen to go to court with their own money and say he or she does not believe the government has the authority to do something. This allows the Congress to go to court and to go early and let a judge decide if the law is being enforced as written or not.

The ENFORCE the Law Act would re-establish the proper limits of the executive branch. It would restore checks and balances. It would also provide a defender of citizens who, in their own capacity, don't have to defend or fight the government by themselves if the Congress itself believes the President has taken authority that he doesn't have or is enforcing the law in a way that wasn't intended.

I think we have to stand up for the rule of law. I have joined in a court case supporting the State of Texas. Texas is suing the administration over what they believe are all kinds of added expenses put on them by the President's power grab in deciding on his own which immigration laws would be enforced and which won't be. Senator CORNYN, Senator CRUZ, and I were signatories to this brief filed in December, and 24 House Members joined us, including the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, saying we agree with these States and that many responsibilities have been placed on them because the President of the United States chose not to enforce the law as written.

Twenty-six States have now joined that lawsuit filed by the State of Texas, and I look forward to the conclusion of that suit because I think the judge is likely to decide that, no, there isn't the selectivity of which laws you enforce that the President has applied here, and there are great costs created for States as a result of that.

Every Senator in this Chamber has a constitutional obligation to curb the unilateral Executive overreach. We

have a chance to do that with the bill that could be before us. We have a chance to do that with the bill the House has sent over. This whole issue goes to the very heart of the system of checks and balances in our country and reiterates the importance of the Constitution and following the Constitution—adhering to the rule of law.

I would like to see us have a chance to do that, as this Department of Homeland Security funding bill should—and eventually, I am confident, will—come to the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, it is good to follow my good friend, the chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration, on which I am ranking member. I don't agree with him, but he is a fine man.

Now, I rise to dispel attempts by the other side of the aisle to dodge responsibility for funding the Department of Homeland Security in a responsible way. Here is what is happening. The rightwing of the Republican Party is risking a Department of Homeland Security shutdown to get their way on immigration. They are saying: Take our hard-right stance on immigration or we won't fund national security.

Most Americans don't agree with that view. Most Americans are for a rational immigration policy. A large majority in this body—bipartisan, led by Senator McCAIN and myself—voted on that in 2013. But we have a small group, led by the junior Senator from Texas, who say: It is our way or we are going to shut down one of the premier agencies dedicated to our security.

As I said when I engaged in a colloquy with my good friend from Texas, our Republican colleagues have the majority. They can debate immigration any time they want. In fact, we welcome that debate. We think the American people are on our side. We are willing to have that debate. We are eager to have that debate but not with a gun put to the head not only of us but of the American people. Do what we, a narrow minority, want or we are going to shut down the Department of Homeland Security—at a time when security is of utmost importance given what has happened around the world and what we just saw happen to the Jordanian pilot yesterday.

This strategy makes no sense. The junior Senator from Texas is leading his party at best into a cul-de-sac, and at worst over a cliff. We are not going to be taken hostage. If my good friend the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL, thinks that by bringing this bill up again and again it is going to change what happened yesterday, it is not. So we are saying to the other side: Now that you have seen the vote, now that you have shown Speaker BOEHNER that we can't pass his bill in the Senate, get real. I say get real, to my friend the majority leader and to the Speaker of the House.

Let's roll up our sleeves, and let's work out a Department of Homeland Security bill and pass it. Let's not hold that agency hostage. Let's not just renew them every couple of months. As the Secretary of DHS said yesterday, that is like getting a car and only giving it five miles of gas at a time. It just doesn't work. So get real. Let's negotiate a DHS spending bill.

I know our Senator from Maryland, the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations, and the Senator from New Hampshire, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the Committee on Appropriations, are eager to sit down and pass a bill that we can all agree on in terms of funding Homeland Security, and then we can debate immigration—but no hostage taking and none of this bullying. None of this: If you don't do it my way, I am going to hurt a whole lot of innocent people. That didn't work in 2013 when Republican numbers plummeted after they tried to shut down the government, and it won't work today.

We will not allow a government shutdown. We will not allow hostage-taking. We will ask our colleagues to get reasonable, do things the way they used to be done, debate each issue on the merits. They have the floor. They can debate any issue they want and move forward.

I will say one other thing to my Republican colleagues: The junior Senator from Texas has you tied in a knot. I say that to Speaker BOEHNER as well: Speaker BOEHNER, the junior Senator from Texas has you tied in a knot. Now you are going to have to find a way to untangle it. We will not be bullied. We will not be told we have to negotiate because you seek to hurt innocent people and hurt our security. We will move forward.

So let me suggest the way to go forward: Let's put a good, clean Homeland Security bill on the floor. Let's make America secure. Then, separately, we are happy to debate immigration to the Republican Party's heart's content, but let's stop this govern-by-crisis mentality, especially when national security hangs in the balance.

So I urge Speaker BOEHNER, I urge Senator MCCONNELL to come to their senses, end this wild goose chase and let us vote on a clean bill forthwith.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I wish to talk about the necessity of having an appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security and the fact that it is being held up over

the issue of folks in the House of Representatives who do not want to appropriate money for the actions that the President has taken in trying to improve a dysfunctional immigration system. Holding up the funding for the Department of Homeland Security appropriations is absolutely ridiculous, in the opinion of this Senator.

The fact is the clock is ticking because the funding runs out in just a couple of weeks—February 27. What does the Department's name imply? Keeping the homeland secure.

In one regard, that means cyber attacks. Doesn't it occur to someone that we have had an extraordinary number of cyber attacks recently? Most everybody will remember Sony. People were attacking us because they wanted to stop the expression of free speech, in this case with regard to a movie the Sony company had produced. Because they got in and got all of the personal data and were manipulating the internal controls of the company with this cyber attack, it is the Department of Homeland Security that is charged. Hopefully, if we can ever pass a cyber security bill that can be signed into law, the portal through which the early warnings will come will be the Department of Homeland Security. By the way, that cost the Sony corporation about \$100 million.

How about what happened to all of the customers of Target: Addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses were taken from 70 million Americans who were customers of Target.

How about Yahoo: Passwords and user names were exposed to cyber attacks.

How about eBay: Users' passwords, because of a cyber attack, had to be changed because they were compromised.

How about a number of major banks, including JPMorgan Chase: Seventy-six million households and seven million small businesses' accounts were affected by the attack.

How about Home Depot: Six million accounts were put at risk.

That ought to be enough to continue the funding of the Department of Homeland Security, but there is a lot more.

Most folks understand that TSA, which checks us as we go through the security at airports, at seaports—TSA is a part of the Department of Homeland Security. Are we going to cut off the funding for TSA—TSA that is now trying to stop the new kind of attacks with nonmetallic explosives?

Remember, because of our intelligence apparatus, working through liaison partners in other countries, about 2 years ago a cartridge in a printer was discovered ultimately going onto an airplane that was bound for the United States—that was a nonmetallic explosive. We were fortunate we got that, but they continue.

These folks who are trying to attack us all over the world are trying very ingenious ways to avoid the security,

and we rely on TSA—especially at American airports—to protect us.

We simply in a couple of weeks can't afford for the appropriations to stop.

How about immigration, U.S. Customs and Border Protection: Again, another responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security, and we are going to cut off the funding on what kind of folks are coming across our borders and what kind of folks we are going to be checking and rechecking and what kind of things they are bringing into the borders.

There are a lot of people who want to get into this country to do us harm. That is the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security.

So it is not only ridiculous to this Senator, it is almost silly. But the problem is it is tragic, and it could be horrendous given the fact that people around the world are trying to harm us as we try to protect ourselves in our national security every day.

This is a debate we should not be having. Unfortunately, it is a condition our politics have come to, and we need to stop that condition.

I leave the Presiding Officer on a happier note. As the Senate goes into recess at the conclusion of my remarks, happily all of the Senators are going to a bipartisan luncheon where we are going to talk about things we can do together. Indeed, that is the happiest thing I have heard today.

Madam President, as I yield the floor, I understand that pursuant to the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. FISCHER).

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 2:45 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I come to the floor in my position as the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee to urge the Senate to pass a clean Homeland Security appropriations bill.