

bob-haired flappers were dancing the Charleston back in the 1920s.

JOHN BOEHNER has wandered the valley. JOHN BOEHNER has also been to the mountaintop. JOHN BOEHNER has slid right back into the valley, and then ascended to great heights yet again. He does it all with hard work. He does it with an earnestness and an honesty I have always admired.

When JOHN talks about struggling to make it, it is not some platitude. When JOHN gets choked up about Americans reaching for their dreams, it is not some act. This is a guy who had to share a bathroom with 11 brothers and sisters. Imagine that. This is a guy whose parents slept on the pullout sofa. This is a guy who worked hard behind the bar and eventually found his way atop the rostrum. Maybe that is why he is so humble. Maybe that is why when he orders breakfast at Pete's, they don't call him Mr. Speaker; they call him "John-John."

Here is what I know about Speaker JOHN BOEHNER. He says the code he lives by is a simple one: Do the right thing for the right reasons, and the right things will happen. I have always found that to be true. I found it to be true in our battles fighting side by side for conservative reform, sometimes from a position deep in the minority. We had our share of Maalox moments. That is for sure. But he always strived to push forward.

As I said about JOHN BOEHNER the day he announced his retirement, grace under pressure, country and institution before self—these are the things that come to mind when I think of him. I wish Speaker BOEHNER the very best in retirement. I thank him for always working hard to do the right thing—for his family, for his district, for his party, and for his country. Farewell, my friend.

PAUL RYAN

Mr. McCONNELL. Though we bid farewell to one Speaker today, we know we will soon be saying hello to a new one. The House will vote later this morning on the nomination of Congressman PAUL RYAN. I think it is appropriate to wait for that vote to occur before making full comments. But I also think it goes without saying that PAUL RYAN is one of the most respected guys around here. Everyone knows he is smart. Everyone knows he is serious. I look forward to working closely with him in pursuit of conservative solutions for our country.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 597

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 597) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last night the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan budget agreement that will keep our Government open, funded, and free from default. Now, 100 percent of the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted for this, and 68 percent of Republicans voted against it. Let's pause just a minute and understand what I said: 68 percent of the Republicans in the House of Representatives voted to default on the full faith and credit of our great country. So 68 percent of the Republicans voted to close our government.

This legislation is now before the Senate. I urge all of my colleagues to support this responsible agreement. It is not perfect, as my friend the Republican leader said. No legislation is. But this budget agreement accomplishes two major priorities the Democrats have long supported. It promotes economic growth by providing relief from sequestration's damaging cuts for 2 years, and it ensures that we invest equally in the middle class and the Pentagon. The budget agreement is good for the middle class, good for the economy, and good for the country.

I thank the people who worked so hard to make this agreement what it is today. The agreement was among President Obama, Speaker BOEHNER, MITCH McCONNELL, Leader PELOSI, and I helped. I applaud and commend the President of the United States. He was firm, he was resolute, and he was—as usual—very smart. I appreciate the good work that he did to help us get to the point where we are now.

To reach these negotiations, each of us had discussions with each other. We also know that a lot of the work was done by our staffs—our respective staffs. My chief of staff, Drew Wilson, represented the Senate Democrats in these negotiations. The Senate Democratic caucus is aware of Drew's expertise, hard work, fairness, and openness. Drew was ably assisted by Gary Myrick—indispensable Gary Myrick, who is the Democratic Secretary, as well as a number of people on my team of senior policy analysts who helped a great deal. Kate Leone—I don't think there is anyone in the Senate who doesn't know who Kate Leon is. She is the expert on health care. Bruce King,

Ellen Doneski, Ayesha Khanna, Trey Reffett, Tyler Moran, George Holman, Gavin Parke, Alex McDonough, and utility man Bill Dauster all worked literally night and day to get this to the point where we were able to be here on the floor today, seeking support for it.

I am so grateful for the wonderful staff that I have, but there were others involved. Senator McCONNELL's negotiator in this was Hazen Marshall. Hazen Marshall is a good person. He was resolute. He carried forward what the Republican leader wanted, but, like my staff, you never get exactly what you want. Everybody enjoyed working with him.

Dave Stewart was Speaker BOEHNER's negotiator on this. I care a great deal about Dave Stewart. David is a good man, and we all admire the work that he has done. I hope the new Speaker to be, PAUL RYAN, will use his good offices. He is very good. He is a talented man.

Dick Meltzer was Leader PELOSI's able negotiator. I have to commend NANCY PELOSI. I so admire this good woman. She is a stalwart in the House of Representatives. She will go down in history as one of the great leaders of that body. I admire her, appreciate her friendship, and extend to anyone within the sound of my voice my appreciation for the work that she did on this bill.

As to the White House, I have already indicated the President did a wonderful job on this, but he also assigned two really terrific, good, outstanding people. I can't say enough about them. Brian Deese was one of the White House negotiators, along with Katie Fallon. Katie is a woman whom we all know in the Senate. She worked for Senator SCHUMER for a number of years, and she worked for the Democratic Policy Committee. She was on the committee for a number of years. We admire her very much. She was so helpful with everything we did in this legislation. She was always easy to get a hold of. She was easy to reach.

It is now time for this important legislation to pass the U.S. Senate.

I have to say a few words about Speaker BOEHNER. I have to admit that I was skeptical when he said that he wanted to clean out the barn before he left, but he found a way to clean out the barn by passing a clean debt limit and a 2-year budget agreement, which should go a long way to returning the appropriations process to the way it should work.

I will always consider him my friend, and I will miss him. I wish him the very best in everything he does in the future. I listened to his final remarks on the House floor, which were very moving. It wasn't only JOHN BOEHNER who shed a tear over there today, but many Members of the House of Representatives and a number of us who watched his final speech shed a tear or two.

There has been a lot of talk about the appropriations process. I have been

an appropriator since I came to the Senate. I was very fortunate as a brand new Senator, which was many decades ago, to be on the Appropriations Committee. What an honor.

The Appropriations Committee's work is not as it used to be. We have to get back to doing individual appropriations bills.

I say to my Republican friends: Let's do the appropriations bills. Let's get rid of these foolish riders that they stick on appropriations bills. We need to understand that there is a time and place for doing that. There is authorization. Do the bills, authorize stuff, but don't mess up the appropriations process. Next year, we will be happy to support individual appropriations bills that come to the floor. We don't need motions to proceed. We will be happy to move to the bill as long as they get rid of those vexatious riders that have nothing to do with the bill brought before us. The Defense appropriations bill doesn't need something dealing with women's health in the sense of directly attacking Planned Parenthood. We don't need on Commerce, State, Justice something that basically does away with the Environmental Protection Agency. There are many examples that I could use. Let's get to doing appropriations bills the way we used to. I want to do them. We don't need to have a motion to proceed as long as my Republican colleagues get rid of these foolish, ideological amendments that have nothing to do with the bill before us.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, yesterday the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families released a stunning report detailing the sharp increase in the number of Nevada children who have health insurance. At one time, we were the most underinsured State in the country for health insurance.

According to the Georgetown study, the number of Nevada children without health insurance fell by 35 percent in just 1 year. In 2013, 15 percent of children in Nevada lacked health insurance coverage. One year later, that number fell to 9.3 percent.

Reading directly from that report:

States with the sharpest declines in the rate of uninsured children were Nevada, Colorado, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. Nevada's decline was considerably larger than any other State.

A 35-percent increase in the number of insured children in 1 year is remarkable. It means more children have access to the care they need to stay healthy. A number of these children will be able to go to the doctor for the first time in their lives. It is yet further proof that the Affordable Care Act is working in Nevada and across America.

Again, I say to my friends, the Republicans: Let's start working together to improve health care. We want to

work with you. If there is a problem you see with ObamaCare, let's work together. We have been able to make some improvements in this law, and we want to make more improvements. We just need cooperation from our Republican friends.

The spike in the number of insured Nevada children is also due to the foresight of the Governor of the State of Nevada. Brian Sandoval is a Republican. He is a proud Republican who supported the State's Medicaid expansion option. He took on all the naysayers.

Why did Brian Sandoval do this? Is he really one of ours? He did this because he thought it was the right thing to do for the State of Nevada, and it has been proven that, in fact, is true. By expanding Medicaid in Nevada, many, many more parents were able to secure affordable health care for their kids. Quite frankly, Governor Sandoval's courage stands in stark contrast to many of his fellow Republicans.

Governors in a number of States dominated by Republican State legislatures have refused to expand coverage to the needy. These Republicans have blocked expanded coverage despite the fact that it means fewer Americans and their children have access to the health care they need. This means that people are dying as a result of this.

Two States with the highest rates of uninsured children, Alaska and Texas, have rejected Medicare expansion, and others have done the same. There were many Republicans in Nevada who wanted to go the same route. The Republican State legislature within the Nevada congressional delegation opposed all efforts to increase access to health care. They have voted to repeal ObamaCare time and time again, but Governor Sandoval was not swayed by the cynics in his own party. He refused to let politics stand in the way of children's health, and today Nevada's children are better for it.

I repeat, the Affordable Care Act is helping American families, it is helping Nevada families, and it is working especially well in States that are actually using the law as it was intended.

I hope more Republicans will follow Governor Sandoval's example, thus helping their States and their constituents by expanding access to quality health care. I am an admirer of Governor Sandoval, and that is saying a lot. His opponent in the last election was my son. But I have to say this: In spite of the fact that my son came in second, Brian Sandoval has done an outstanding job as Governor. I admire him and appreciate what he has done. I don't agree with everything he has done. I had some disagreements with what he did in the legislature. None of us are perfect, and he certainly isn't, but I appreciate what he has done for the betterment of the State of Nevada.

LATINA EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, earlier this year we recognized Equal Pay Day—a day that highlights the disparaging wage gap between women and men in the United States. Equal Pay Day marks the day when women's wages finally catch up with men's wages from the previous year.

On average, American women make about 77 cents for every \$1 that their male colleagues make while doing the very same job. This unjust and immoral reality is even more pronounced for women of color.

Tomorrow is Latina Equal Pay Day, the point at which wages of Latina women in America catch up to men's earnings from the previous year. It is today. They have had to work all of this time to catch up. The fact that a Hispanic woman must work a full year, plus 9 months and 30 days, just to make what her male co-workers make is certainly unacceptable.

In Nevada, Latina women earn 53 cents for every \$1 their fellow male workers make. It is not just a problem in Nevada; it is a problem nationwide. Nationwide they earn 55 cents for every \$1 a man makes for doing the exact same work. All told, the wage gap that Latina women face results in a loss of over \$25,000 a year for these women. That is \$25,000 that could be used to help these women sustain their families.

To make matters worse, the wage gaps that exist between Latina women and their male counterparts disproportionately affect Hispanic families. Why? Because Latina women are more likely to be the primary breadwinners for their families. Thirty percent of all Hispanic families in the United States are headed by a single mother, and 40 percent of married Latina women earn more than 50 percent of their family's income.

As legislators, it is our duty to seek the well-being of all Americans. Democrats don't take that responsibility lightly. We understand that when wages of women do not reflect their hard work, it undermines the strength of families and communities throughout the Nation. That is why we have continually and consistently fought to secure equal pay for equal work.

Five times in 5 years Republicans have stood in the way of equal pay for women. They have stood in the way of equal wages for their own sisters, daughters, and wives. Even Republican women—that is Republican Members of Congress—have refused to address this important issue. The proposal that Republicans have put forward falls short of ensuring real equal pay protections and ignores the realities women face in fighting for fair pay. In so doing, Republicans have proudly placed their stamp of approval on unequal paychecks across America.

The wage gap Latina women endure is a disgrace to this Nation. No woman should make less than a man who does the exact same work. Latina women