

ourselves the luxury of having that discussion when the territory is not in default. Let's come together and pass some legislation for them to restructure their debt. Let a professional organization take the politics out of this and make the best financial decisions that can be made now to save the U.S. taxpayer from further expense.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

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BEING HONEST WITH THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

MR. SASSE. Mr. President, earlier today it was reported that the President's Deputy National Security Adviser was asked about my call that the President and the administration speak clearly about the nature of the enemy we face—about my call that we be honest with the American people and with ourselves about the fact that we are at war with militant Islam, we are at war with jihadi Islam, and we are at war with violent Islam.

In response, the White House was quoted in the *World-Herald* this morning as saying this:

Our strong belief is to not treat these ISIL terrorists as leaders of some religious movement. Even if you have a derogatory adjective attached to it—radical Islam or Islamic extremism—essentially you are saying they are the leaders of a religious movement. And that is what they want. They want to be seen not as terrorists and killers and thugs, as the president said, but as leaders who speak on behalf of religion. And that is why we have not identified them as the enemy in this effort.

This is lunacy. First, while the White House is insisting that no one use the word “Islamic” or note any connection between the war that we are facing and some subset of Islam—even as the White House insists that no one use the word, their own preferred adjective, “ISIL” or “ISIS,” begins with an “I.” Every fourth grader in America can deduce without any assistance from Vanna White what the rest of the word that begins with an “I” is. Yet the White House insists that no one should use the word.

They are dealing with a world they wish were so, as opposed to the world with which we are called to struggle. The world in which we live is a world where we are going to be facing a decades-long battle with militant Islam, with jihadi Islam, with violent Islam. We are obviously not at war with all Muslims, but we are at war with those who believe they would kill in the name of religion, and the White House insists that we muzzle ourselves and not tell the truth.

Second, the White House's logic for why we shouldn't tell the truth to the American people or to ourselves is because the leaders of ISIL supposedly want to be identified with a religious movement. The leaders of the ISIL movement and the broader jihadi movement that is trying to kill Ameri-

cans and all those who believe in freedom and in open society—the leaders of this movement also want to be martyred. Isn't the President's position that we should not kill them because they desire to be martyred? This is lunacy.

We have to speak the truth not because it alone will somehow diminish ISIL or ISIS, but because speaking the truth is actually the only way we can begin to develop policies that will not lead to more failed States in the Middle East, which are producing the terror training camps of next year.

Despite the fact that we are actually and obviously at war with militant Islam, there is a terrible leadership vacuum in this country. The American people know this, and, frankly, those of us who are getting our classified briefings and having to engage the leadership of our national security and intelligence communities know this leadership vacuum exists. Those who are trying to keep Americans safe—there are many wonderful, freedom-loving civil servants fighting to protect our kids, and they know and experience this vacuum of leadership every day.

This vacuum is felt outside the beltway and everywhere in America, as is obvious in many of our towns. But even more dishearteningly and more dangerously, it is increasingly obvious to the professionals working in our intelligence community and in our national security structure that this vacuum is harming our national security and our intelligence community as they try to fight for our freedom.

Here is why this matters. This vacuum prevents them from doing their jobs. They have no strategy to deploy, they have no rational policy to implement, and they have been asked to defeat an enemy that their Commander in Chief refuses to name. This is lunacy, it is absurd, and it is unacceptable.

MR. PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, I appreciate the words of the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. SASSE, with whom I enjoy serving on the banking committee, and I appreciate his good work. I take a bit of issue with his comments. I know there are more than two options. But I hear the greatest criticisms of the President from those same people, urging—not necessarily Senator SASSE in this case, but many of the leaders in this body on the Republican side who were some of the strongest advocates for the war in Iraq. Some of those same people are saying, back into the Middle East, sending combat troops.

Going back to war is something that the American people—we all come to the floor claiming to speak for the American people, perhaps, but we know that is not good policy and that is not what most people in this country want to do. But I appreciate the comments of the Senator.

MR. SASSE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question? Do you believe there is any connection between our enemy and Islam?

MR. BROWN. Excuse me?

MR. SASSE. Do you believe there is any connection between our enemy and Islam?

MR. BROWN. I am not here to debate this. I don't know exactly what that means: a connection between the enemy and Islam. I know that semantics matter, and I know the criticism of the President in this body is sort of front and center no matter what he does.

When he gave what I thought was a coherent speech, often with restraint, where we have taken the—I think we have taken the fight to ISIL in this country. I think we have done it domestically. I think the President wants to do it internationally, and this body doesn't seem to have the courage to debate whether or not we actually look at an authorization resolution—an authorization for use of force. The President is still forced to rely on a resolution that President Bush pushed through that led to disastrous policies in Iraq. I don't think that was right.

But I apologize. I want to speak on something else, Mr. President, and that is why I came to the floor.

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SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS

MR. BROWN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago most of us went home to our families to celebrate and give thanks for the many blessings we have in this country. We all look forward to spending more time with family during this holiday season, but for far too many Americans the holidays are just another time when they struggle to put food on the table or even to have a roof over their heads. This is sadly particularly true of our Nation's veterans.

Again, to go back 15 years, we take people into war in this country—sometimes for very good reason. Our sending troops to Afghanistan was exactly the right policy back in 2002 and 2003. Going into the war in Iraq was something very different.

If we in this body are going to send people into war, it is time we think about the costs of war, not come to the Senate floor and make speeches about how tough we are as Senators, when most Senators don't have children—some do, but most don't have children who go off to war. We are willing to send people into combat, and then we too often turn our backs on those soldiers once they come home and become our Nation's veterans.

The suicide rate is too high among veterans, many of them suffering from PTSD or traumatic brain injury or a host of other illnesses or afflictions. The suicide rate is too high, the unemployment rate for veterans is too high, and the drug addiction rate is too high. Yet, how often our colleagues come and talk about, let's send combat troops, let's go to war. How rarely they talk

about what we do with these men and women when they come home, whose lives have been changed dramatically. These are the costs of war, and they don't get nearly the attention on the Senate floor, in the media, or among policymakers as do the actually going to war and sending our troops.

It is shameful that veterans have these rates of unemployment, addiction, suicide, and homelessness. We have made progress on homelessness through a combination of increased Federal investments and improved services. Over the past 5 years, homelessness among veterans has declined 36 percent, but too many remain on the streets.

Veterans comprise 12 percent of the Nation's adult homeless population. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, some 48,000 veterans were homeless—including 1,200 in my State of Ohio—on a given night in January when a census, if you will, was taken about homelessness. That is 48,000 too many. It is a disgrace that they serve our country with honor, and thousands are left without a roof over their head. Think about that. We send them off to war. They are sometimes damaged by their time in combat or their time in the military, and we don't care enough to find them places to live and find them drug treatment and find them jobs and give the kind of help to them that they gave to our country.

I met the veterans the organizations serve—organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, these groups and counties called veteran service organizations. My State is blessed to have one in each of our 88 counties. I hear about their stories of perseverance. They are inspiring.

I visited the Joseph House in Cincinnati, where Nathan Pelletier and his team of dedicated staff and volunteers provided addiction treatment and transitional housing to veterans. We heard from Britton Carter, who was formerly homeless. He completed the treatment program at Joseph House. He now works as a case manager helping other struggling veterans. He spoke about the trials he has overcome. He said:

As a small youth I fell in love with playing army men. My mom would buy me little army men, and I dreamed of one day being a soldier.

God had given me the gift of being a pretty good basketball player and as such I became the first freshman to play and start on any varsity team. With success came fans and countless people, many of whom had an agenda that didn't necessarily have my best interest at stake.

From the early years of high school I found myself star struck, and I would end up in the company of those who used drugs—first pot and wine, later I was introduced to heroin and cocaine.

With the grace of God, I was given the opportunity to attend college at New Mexico Military Institution in Roswell, NM. There were other offers from schools, but I was attracted to the opportunity of being able to play army man once again.

I was caught with drugs and kicked out of school, and as a result I lost the chance to

become an officer in the United States military. I went to another college—only to have my drug addiction lead me to poor choices that brought my career closer and closer to an end, where the only thing I felt I had to hold onto would be a career in the Army.

I enlisted, and discovered that being away from home . . . left me face-to-face with those old demons, and once again I was being discharged. . . . It wasn't long after my return . . . that I found myself in and out of trouble. Having no insurance to pay for the treatment I truly needed to address my addiction, and nearly a life sentence on the installment plan and years of struggle. . . .

He goes on.

[The Joseph House] was the one place that believed in never leaving any soldier behind—the Joseph House.

It was while at the Joseph House that I had the opportunity to get the treatment I so badly needed. . . . Today, thanks to God and his mercy. . . .

He goes on to talk about some of the things he has done. He has written a play. He has produced a play. He has done wonderful things, especially for his fellow veterans. His story should serve as a reminder to all of us that we should not leave the men and women who serve this country.

There are so many stories like his. In October I was in Dayton, where I met with Robert White at the Homefull organization—Homefull as opposed to the homeless. He served 4 years in the Army Reserves and 1 year on Active Duty. He was honorably discharged in 1980 and spent years working, facing challenges that he said left him “lower than low.” He said, “As soon as I left for basic training, I was homeless.” He talked about his work, his time in shelters. He said the result was always the same. He said, “I entered homeless, and no matter how good I did, I still left homeless.”

Then, on the July Fourth weekend 7 years ago, he entered Homefull’s VA per diem transitional supportive housing program. He became a model guest at Homefull. He got a job in Trotwood, a community near Dayton. He still has the same job. Homefull connected Mr. White with its partner organization, which helped him achieve home ownership. Today he has gone from homeless veteran to owner of his own home. That is because of his community in Dayton, because of this organization Homefull, and it is because of the partnership with the Veterans’ Administration, whose funding is always under jeopardy because of many Members of the Senate and House who simply don’t put the same effort into helping veterans as they do into funding the military.

Last month I was in Cleveland. I visited the Supportive Housing Home for Veterans. I visited the Trumbull Metropolitan Housing Authority in Youngstown. These organizations are providing work that is so important. We owe them our support.

Even one veteran on the street means Congress isn’t doing enough to tackle this problem. That is why I joined my colleagues in introducing the Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015, which

would make meaningful improvements to services for homeless veterans and give more veterans access to housing opportunities.

President Kennedy, in his 1963 Thanksgiving proclamation—I believe the week before he died—said, “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

Sure, we come to this floor. We send people off to battle. Surely we need to do that sometimes. Sure, we come to the floor and talk about veterans, but so often we don’t live up to the obligations to help these veterans deal with their homelessness, to help veterans deal with suicide, with the threat of suicide, the likelihood of suicide for some of them, help our veterans deal with drug addiction, help our veterans deal with mental health issues. Often these are costs of war that we simply don’t discuss on the Senate floor. It is so important that we do. I hope my colleagues will join me in ensuring every veteran has an opportunity to succeed.

#### TRIBUTE TO MEGHAN DUBYAK

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in closing, I want to recognize a long-term staff member, a young woman who has served in my office, Meghan Dubyak. She has been my communications director for most of my years in the Senate. She comes from Shaker Heights, OH. She has been a terrific public servant. Today is her last day. This is about her last hour on the job, although she is going with me tonight to do one other appearance. Meghan is planning to get married this summer. She is taking tomorrow off and is going on Monday to join the staff of the Vice President of the United States, JOE BIDEN. She has been an incredible employee. I wish her well. My wife Connie and I will love Meghan as long as we have the privilege of knowing her in the years ahead.

So thank you to Meghan.  
I yield the floor.

#### REMEMBERING OFFICER DANIEL ELLIS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to pay tribute to a Kentucky police officer who was tragically lost in the line of duty. Officer Daniel Ellis of the Richmond Police Department was shot while searching an apartment for a robbery suspect on November 4, 2015, and died from his wounds 2 days later. He was 33 years old.

“Our lives will never be the same again, the lives of his fellow officers and of his family will never be the same,” Richmond Police Chief Larry Brock said during Officer Ellis’s funeral. “He turned out to be a great police officer. He was one of those guys that just got it and got it early.”

Officer Ellis started at the department on August 11, 2008. He was known as a kindhearted man who treated others with dignity and respect. One day