

Under a short-term budget, there is no additional funding for ICE—Immigration and Customs—to hire additional investigators for anti-trafficking and smuggling cases to combat the influx of unaccompanied children at the southern border.

Under a short-term budget, there is no funding to address Secret Service weaknesses identified by the independent Protective Mission Panel in response to the White House fence-jumping incident.

Under a short-term budget, aging nuclear weapon detection equipment will not be replaced, causing gaps that could allow our enemies to smuggle a nuclear device or dirty bomb into the country.

A short-term budget would delay upgrades to infrastructure that allow for emergency communications among first responders.

A short-term budget would delay the contract for the Coast Guard's eighth national security cutter—a cutter we need for maritime security. Life-extending maintenance work on the important 140-foot icebreaking tugs, 225-foot oceangoing buoy tenders, and the Coast Guard's training vessel would be scaled back. The deep freeze on the Great Lakes in 2014 cost the shipping industry \$705 million and 3,800 jobs. Upgrading the Coast Guard's 140-foot icebreaking fleet is critical to dealing with these conditions.

A short-term budget would prevent Customs and Border Protection from awarding contracts for new remote video surveillance systems to detect border crossings and track threats.

Funding DHS should not be controversial. Playing politics and threatening to cut off critical programs that protect the country from terror attacks would result in consequences we can't afford. We should work together to pass a full-year, clean funding bill to continue the important work the Department of Homeland Security does every day to keep Americans safe.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UKRAINE

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, each time I have taken to the floor to comment on the Ukrainian crisis which I have done often the situation in that hard pressed country is worse. Today we see renewed and even more violent Russian aggression ripping off more ragged bites of Ukrainian territory.

Now, ten months after Russia's invasion of its neighbor, we are again seeing calls for more assistance to Ukraine, including providing weapons that would better enable the Ukrainians to defend themselves. But still the White House dithers—baffled again by the complexities of a world that pleads for leadership. Once again we are absent not just leading from behind, which is bad enough, but in many cases not leading at all, and the world con-

tinues to look to us for guidance and for support in dealing with some of these crises.

The plight of Ukraine, torn to bits by Russian aggression, is among many foreign policy problems that have been aggravated by U.S. policy failures. Those failures have come from a White House isolated in a wasteland of confusion. The Obama administration has no coherent strategy for dealing with the world other than, in a now famous paraphrase, “Don’t do stupid stuff”—whatever that means. But not doing anything is stupid stuff, and a lot of times that is exactly what is coming out of the White House nothing.

At the same time, we in Congress need to look at ourselves. We must concede that Congress also has failed to grapple with these pressing issues particularly over the last ten months relative to Ukraine. We also have failed to live up to our constitutional responsibilities. We, too, have failed to offer or compel solutions when congressional action could have helped.

One way in which we can correct that record is by giving the Ukrainian crisis our renewed attention. I am happy to say, under Republican leadership, despite what we have been prevented from doing in the past ten months, we are now in a position to begin doing just that.

Why Ukraine, and why does it deserve our full attention? For the first time since the Second World War, a European state has invaded and annexed the territory of a neighbor. This outrageous contravention of every possible standard of state behavior in the modern world passed by without a response that could have reversed the outrage and without the reaction that might forestall it being repeated in other states bordering on Russia. We will see what happens.

Vladimir Putin's ruthless ambitions have been backed by a massive Soviet style propaganda campaign that continues to include outrageous, bald faced lying by the President of Russia and his most senior Russian officials. They continue to deny what has been obvious to the world and documented, verified facts about Russian troops and equipment flowing into Ukraine and the obvious intentions of further territorial expansion.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda chief, invented the “big lie” theory that Putin is using to great effect. Hitler famously said that many people tell small lies, but few have the guts to tell really big ones, and when they do and the lies are repeated over and over, they become a new truth. Tragically, I believe we are at that stage in the Ukraine crisis.

At the onset of this crisis, I drafted and introduced a resolution supporting the territorial integrity of the Ukraine and condemning Russian aggression. Later, I created and introduced the Crimea Annexation Non recognition Act and the Russian Weapons Embargo Act. I also cosponsored the Russian Ag-

gression Prevention Act and the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Unfortunately, none of these measures emerged from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the previous session of Congress, all stymied by the committee's prior leadership. The only measure that did pass the Senate was one I coauthored and sponsored with Senator DURBIN, a resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine. So the Senate's record of legislative inaction does not show a Senate that has dealt effectively with this international crisis.

It is more difficult to criticize the administration for being ineffective when we in the Senate have also failed to pass almost any meaningful legislation to provide the executive branch with the advice and guidance it so obviously requires. I trust the record will improve this year and that change will begin immediately. I believe this is happening, and we will see that on this floor shortly.

In the meantime, the civil war in Ukraine continues and, until last week, almost beneath the radar. With renewed vigor, separatists, newly armed and reinforced by Russia, are waging latest and continuing battles for territory in eastern Ukraine. There is little pretense at even trying to disguise the involvement of Putin's Russia in these renewed attacks. At least 6,000 people have been killed by combat in Ukraine, more than 1,000 of them since the latest so called cease fire allegedly took effect. At least half a million people are internal refugees.

But the even greater ongoing tragedy is the geopolitical catastrophe. A newly aggressive Russia, driven by destructive delusions of nationalistic destiny, poses a threat to the stability of the region and to Europe itself. This is a completely self-evident reality for our allies on Russia's periphery, including those such as Poland and the Baltic States, who in the past have been crushed into nonexistence by Russian aggression.

If we in Congress together with the executive branch and if the United States together with our European allies cannot respond to Putin's Russia in a way that stops this dangerous aggression, then he will have won. Putin is counting on the force of his troops and his propaganda machine to create a fait accompli to which we will have little or no reply. He is counting on our distraction and exhaustion to give him a free pass. He is counting on the political complexity of our democracy to obstruct sound policymaking. And he is counting on us to falter just at the moment when his violent aggression is paying off and his people are prepared for more.

I am speaking today to urge the Senate to work quickly to change Putin's calculations about the costs he and his nation will suffer should Russia not return to rational, responsible modern state behavior. Leading in this manner will not be easy. Yes, we are besieged

with foreign policy issues. Yes, providing the needed Senate response and meaningful legislative proposals is difficult. Yes, ultimately the final responsibility and leadership rests with the President. But the Senate historically has been instrumental in developing and influencing U.S. foreign policy. At this critical time, we must do so again, and we must do so again particularly because so little comes our way from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

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

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

MAINE COMMUNITY HEALTH OPTIONS

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a little-discussed aspect of the Affordable Care Act. Before touching on the main subject, I should point out that I think as of tonight there will be more than 11 million Americans who will have already signed up for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act so far this year. Of course, the deadline is coming up next week, and this weekend there could be a very large influx of newly insured Americans, which I think is an occurrence we should all feel very proud of and should celebrate.

I wish to speak about a part of the Affordable Care Act that gets very little mention, very little discussion, and very little controversy. It is a provision that enables local organizations within a State to form cooperative insurance entities, to form nonprofits, to provide insurance to their citizens. Today I wish to speak about one of those—and one of the most successful in the country—the Maine Community Health Options program.

It is a story of an opportunity. It is a story of a vision. It is a story of an idea. It is a story of risk taking. It is a story of creative and dedicated Maine professionals who were willing to take a risk and try to implement a new idea. It is one of the health insurance co-ops, as I mentioned, that was established by the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act provided the opportunity to develop something new and different in health insurance—a company where purchasers of health insurance also become members and then elect other members to serve on the board of directors of their insurance company.

Kevin Lewis and Robert Hillman, two of the founders, saw an opportunity in the ACA to develop this idea they knew was needed to address the challenges of health care coverage for Maine citizens. Working with a group of people in Maine who shared their concerns about health care, they built Maine Commu-

nity Health Options based on this vision of meeting Maine's people's health insurance needs in a direct and hands-on way.

Would it work? Nobody knew. When the enrollment opened last year, their goal, their hope, their vision was for 15,000 signups. By the time the dust settled at the deadline last spring, they had 40,000 signups. Eighty-three percent of the marketplace signups in Maine had signed up with this fledgling company. This year, I am told, as of today they have over 60,000 signups.

I did a tour of their offices recently in Lewiston, ME, and we talked about this phenomenon of all the signups that came unexpectedly. It reminded me of a TV commercial we all saw a few years ago where these young people start an Internet startup. They see the sales orders coming in, and they are happy. Then they start to come in even faster, and they get even more excited. Then they start to come in even faster, and they look at each other and say, what do we do now? These people in Maine experienced exactly that. Great, it is working. A few more. Wow, that is great. Then it went crazy. They all shook their heads. When we talked about this in Lewiston a few weeks ago, they said that is exactly the way it felt.

This sounds simple and straightforward, and it wasn't. When those 40,000 folks were signing up and the systems were challenged, Maine Community Health Options faced those issues head-on. They figured out where the problems were, addressed them, and communicated to members quickly and directly. That is really the Maine way.

The explosion of growth of this little company from zero to 60,000 is a jobs story as well. Maine Community Health Options now employs over 130 people and has even contracted with a local call center in Maine to provide additional customer support during this enrollment period. Even their chosen location is a good-news story. It is a great news story for New England and for Maine because they are in an old textile mill. The textile industry flourished in New England up through the 1950s but then left these beautiful old mills in Lewiston, ME. One of these mills—first one floor and now two floors—is being repurposed for this 21st century project of bringing health insurance to the people of Maine. It is humming with activity, new jobs, and people supporting their families.

It is also a local control story. Maine Community Health Options recently held elections for the board—a board that has to be made up of 51 percent of their individuals who are members who are elected by other members. In other words, the people who use the products and who buy the health insurance are actually making decisions about how those products should be designed. They are responsible to the folks who elect them—like us.

The structure of the organization is only part of the story. I think this is

very important. They are also focused on the business of health—individual health and community health. They are focused on prevention.

The cheapest medical intervention of all of this is the one that never occurs, because people have preventive care that keeps them from more serious chronic care. They have a chronic illness support program and a tobacco cessation program which are both designed to make it easier and cheaper for members to manage chronic care or stop smoking. That is how we are going to save money in the health care system. They have a behavioral health partnership creating a nearly seamless transition for members in need of short-term mental health services, with no copay for the first three visits. They are doing community outreach. They recognize many people who have never had health insurance coverage before don't fully understand how to use it. Their community outreach effort includes informational presentations on health care for members and nonmembers alike.

Another part of the good-news story is Maine Community Health Options has just expanded its coverage into New Hampshire and is providing a new health care option for the people of New Hampshire. Whereas last year, as I understand it, New Hampshire only had one option on their exchange, now I think they have at least two, and perhaps three or four, one of which I commend to the Presiding Officer is based in Lewiston, ME.

Finally—and I think this is very important—what has this done for rates? I think we have lost sight of this in the last couple of years. For many years, one of the problems in health care in this country was the exaggerated inflation of health care costs—5, 6, 7, 8 percent a year was not unusual in the late 1990s and the early first decade of this century. That was the typical, somewhat expected inflation in the rates of health care costs—in the cost of health care and, therefore, in insurance rates.

Maine Community Health Options not only has reduced its already competitive rates, reduced its rates by 1 percent this year, but that competitive pressure, we believe, has also brought pressure to reduce rates for other providers and other carriers in Maine.

This is a great news story. This is people who saw an opportunity created by the Affordable Care Act to create a new kind of health insurance company that is owned and run by its members, that is delivering health care, quality health care insurance coverage, to the people of Maine and now the people of New Hampshire, that is helping to control costs, and I think most importantly is taking an active role in assisting its members in improving their own health. Of course, this is about cost. Of course, it is about access. Of course, it is about all the mechanics of health insurance. But in the end, if the result is healthier people, people who need the intervention of the health