

Americans were flatly told: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. That turned out to be a promise the administration could not or would not keep. They were told: If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan. It turned out the administration was not able to make good on that promise. We can do better.

With regard to the Federal budget, the national debt now exceeds \$18 trillion. During the next 10 years, interest payments on the debt will be the fastest growing budget expenditure. Interest on the debt will be the fastest growing expenditure, more than tripling to \$800 billion. Put in perspective, one out of every seven tax dollars taken in by the government will be used to service the Federal debt.

Why is regular order important in this regard? In returning to regular order, the Senate Republicans will enact a budget resolution each year as required by law. We haven't done this. The law requires it, but somehow Congress has waived this requirement for themselves. This contrasts sharply with the past 5 years, during which the Democratic-led Senate passed only one budget. As a result, Congress has not adopted a joint budget resolution since 2009. This will change in this new day of Congress.

Under the previous majority, spending bills were not brought to the floor to be debated. Budget laws were routinely waived or ignored, and there has been no plan whatever for finally bringing the Federal budget under control. These are facts. We need to change that, and I hope we will do so in this Congress.

In conclusion, we have plenty of work to do. People in my State of Mississippi, like most Americans, expect results from this Congress. The challenges of our economy, the importance of our national defense, and the negative impact of intrusive executive overreach are too great not to address. We need to meet the expectations of the American people in this regard.

The distinguished majority leader reminded us earlier this week that Americans want a government that works, one that functions with efficiency and accountability, competence and purpose.

I believe we can do that, but it will take a return to regular order. It will take faith in the committee process. It will take faith in returning this institution to functioning the way the Founders intended. And it will take meaningful legislation. It is time to put the priorities of the American people first.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SARAH KENNEY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, when Sarah Kenney decided to volunteer with the Women's Rape Crisis Center in Burlington, VT, in 1997, she may not have realized just how that experience would shape nearly two decades of her life. There, in cramped offices furnished with old futons, she recalls, "I fell in love with the passion of the place."

That passion led Sarah to the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, where she has spent the past 13 years advocating to end such violence and to raise public awareness about the abhorrent crimes that account for roughly half of all homicides in Vermont in any given year.

Over the years, Sarah has been a trusted and valuable partner in my work to strengthen support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including the successful reauthorization and expansion of the Violence Against Women Act so that it better protects all survivors. Her understanding of the legislative process, combined with her ability to work with all sides, have been the hallmark of her effective advocacy. Sarah has also spent much time at the Vermont State House, testifying on legislation to strengthen protections against victims of crime across our State.

Sarah will be leaving her post as the Vermont Network's Associate Director of Public Policy this month, to take on a new advocacy role as Deputy Director at Let's Grow Kids in Burlington, where she will use her tremendous skills on behalf of bettering children's lives.

I am proud to note that Sarah holds a bachelor's degree in political science from my alma mater, St. Michael's College. Her contributions are too many to list here, but her work in shaping policy has undoubtedly resulted in stronger protections for women and families in Vermont and across the Nation. In my 40 years in the U.S. Senate, I have worked with many advocates who are passionate about the work they do. I can say that Sarah's passion and commitment make her one of the best. She is superbly effective in turning advocacy into action.

In Vermont, we are fortunate to have an organization such as the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and even more fortunate to

have someone of Sarah's talents advocating on behalf of victims. It has been an honor to work with someone whose commitment to a cause is so distilled and focused. The Vermont Network will miss Sarah's many talents, but Vermont's children have just gained a passionate advocate.

I wish Sarah and her family all the best in her new role.

TRIBUTE TO STEWART HOLMES

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I want to express my gratitude for the service of my long-time aide, Stewart Holmes, who is leaving the U.S. Senate to pursue a new career. Stewart has served the Senate in different capacities over the past 17 years in a manner that reflects credit on the institution and our Nation. During this time, I have valued Stewart as a trusted and loyal advisor with sound judgment on complex national security issues. More broadly, his public service on Capitol Hill has contributed to the safety of the American people and our Nation.

Stewart's sense of service, responsibility, and dedication to the United States is closely linked to his own 22-year military service career. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1979, and was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in 1986. He was deployed during Operation Desert Storm. While in the military, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Citadel in South Carolina and a Master of Arts degree in Financial Management from the U.S. Naval Post Graduate School. In 1997, he became the first military fellow to serve in my Senate office, a position that preceded his becoming the Marine Corps Appropriations Liaison.

In 2001, Stewart Holmes retired from the Marine Corps as a major and joined my staff as a military legislative assistant. In 2005, he joined the Senate Committee on Appropriations and served as an intelligence and military advisor to me. He became minority clerk of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in 2009.

Throughout my association with Stewart, he has been a hard worker. He has demonstrated consummate professionalism, attention to detail, and dedication to the Senate as an institution. These qualities have served him well as the Defense Subcommittee has worked to overcome the fiscal and political challenges inherent in funding our national security priorities. I appreciate his work on various issues of importance to our national interests and to my State of Mississippi, including shipbuilding, supercomputers, next generation technology, shipbuilding, NASA and others.

As Stewart moves on with the next chapter of his career, I wish him, his wife, Maren, and their children every success and happiness. We will miss him here in the Senate. I am pleased to extend my thanks to him for the great job he has done in the Senate.●

TRIBUTE TO SHEILA DWYER

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, as the 114th Congress begins, I would like to pay tribute to a Connecticut native who retired at the end of the last session. Sheila Dwyer, who served as Assistant Secretary of the Senate since 2007, will be deeply missed by many. She worked closely with former Majority Leader HARRY REID and with current Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, who had passionate, strong praise for Sheila's dedication and devotion to this institution. Both recognized that she became known as the "Mayor of Capitol Hill" for the skill and poise she consistently demonstrated in handling the needs of 100 Senators at a time.

Sheila was born in Waterbury, CT, and she has remained very proud of her roots in our great State throughout her career. While still in high school, she served a semester as a Senate Page, and she later returned to spend her career here. After working for such luminaries as Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, and Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, she joined Senator REID's office.

Along the way, Sheila amassed an impressive record of accomplishments that included overseeing logistics for two national Democratic conventions, assisting in Presidential inaugurations and countless ceremonial events, and coordinating the myriad departments and behind-the-scenes operations that keep the Senate running. Throughout, she has built and maintained friendships with Senators and staff from all corners of the Capitol and the country. Leader REID spoke quite movingly about how, in addition to her professional achievements, she has been a strong source of personal support for his family and others.

My wife Cynthia and I are honored to know Sheila, and we wish her all the best as she begins the next chapter of her life. I know that all of Connecticut joins me in congratulating her on her exemplary achievements here in the Senate.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING FATHER LOUIS LOHAN

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate the Reverend Louis Lohan who is retiring after more than 40 years of distinguished service as a Roman Catholic priest serving the Diocese of Biloxi in Mississippi.

Born in Ireland, Father Lohan attended schools there and graduated from St. Patrick's College in Carlow, Ireland. He became an ordained priest for the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi in June of 1971 and moved to the United States shortly thereafter.

Father Lohan served at several different ministry locations, such as Our Lady of Victories in Pascagoula, Mis-

sion in Saltillo, Mexico, Our Lady of the Gulf in Bay St. Louis, Sacred Heart in D'Iberville, and at the churches in Wiggins, Lucedale, and Leakesville for 9 years.

In 1993, Father Lohan began service as pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Long Beach, MS, where he remained for the next 21 years. In 2005, he participated in the rebuilding effort of the church, community center, office complex, and elementary school after they were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Father Louis Lohan has diligently served the Diocese of Biloxi, and I am pleased to congratulate and thank him for his many years of devoted service to the people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.●

RECOGNIZING HENDERSON VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court Program for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans with vital services that range from job placement to suicide prevention. Located in Henderson, NV, this unique program assists our Nation's bravest as they return from the battlefield and readjust to life in their communities.

The brave men and women who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom have often come home to a struggling economy. All too often, returning veterans are unable to find a job or afford to buy or rent a home. As the demographics of our Armed Forces have changed throughout the years, so, too, have the needs of our Nation's heroes. The Henderson Veterans Treatment Court, founded in 2011 by Henderson Chief Judge Mark Stevens, received national recognition and is illustrative of how the program should be implemented. With 53 graduates and 41 active participants, this program is a shining example of the type of initiatives that will help get our veterans back on their feet. Although there is no way to ever adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court acts as a one-stop solution for veterans who find themselves in a position of need.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but also to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and service-members in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans service organizations like the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the

Henderson Veterans Treatment Court, a program with a mission that is both noble and necessary. I am honored to acknowledge the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court and its tireless efforts to put veterans back on their feet in Nevada and throughout the United States. Their duty to provide veterans with the skills that will allow them the opportunity to change their circumstances is admirable, and I wish the program the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 23. An act to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 34. An act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 35. An act to increase the understanding of the health effects of low doses of ionizing radiation.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 22. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 23. An act to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 34. An act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 35. An act to increase the understanding of the health effects of low doses of