

made clear, it is that the Obama economy is not working for American families. Republicans are committed to fixing that.

Growing our economy is going to be our No. 1 priority next Congress. There are a number of things we can do to get our economy healthy again. We can reform our Tax Code to reduce the burden on American families and businesses. Right now, our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the developed world. More and more, American companies are focusing their business operations overseas because the tax situation is so much better abroad. That means American jobs are going overseas with them. We have lost our competitive edge in an increasingly global economy. Instead of pushing corporations out of this country, we should bring our Nation's corporate tax rate in line with those of other countries to keep more jobs here in the United States.

Another big thing we can do is repeal some of the burdensome government regulations that are weighing down businesses. While some government regulations are necessary, every administration has to remember that regulations have consequences. The more resources individuals and businesses spend complying with unnecessary government regulations, the less they have to focus on the growth and innovation that drive our economy and create new opportunities for workers. The overregulation of the last 8 years has left businesses with few resources to dedicate to growing and creating jobs.

Another thing we need to do is address our national debt, which has nearly doubled over the past 8 years. All that debt is a drag on the economy. It slows growth and reduces economic opportunity. It is time to get our government back on a budget.

Another way we can help lift the burden on American families is by repealing and replacing ObamaCare. I don't need to tell anyone that the President's health care law is broken. The promise of lower premiums and affordable health care has given way to the reality of giant premium increases and massive deductibles. A Gallup poll released yesterday found that 80 percent of Americans want major changes to ObamaCare or want the law repealed and replaced completely. It is time to give the American people health care reform that actually works.

Another priority for the 115th Congress will be national security. Americans are rightly worried about the threat posed by terrorist groups like ISIS, which has spread violence and devastation not only in the Middle East but across Europe and beyond. Republicans are committed to defeating ISIS abroad and to keeping Americans safe here at home.

We are also committed to keeping Americans safe by securing our borders. We must have secure borders and policies that encourage legal immigration while discouraging illegal immigration.

There are other priorities we need to address: confirming a Supreme Court nominee who will judge based on the law and the Constitution; protecting religious liberty; and the list goes on.

Republicans are aware of the trust the American people have placed in us, and we are committed to earning it. We are going to spend the 115th Congress fighting for the American people's priorities. We have a real chance to get things done in the next Congress, and I look forward to working with my colleagues here in the Senate on both sides of the aisle to address the challenges that are facing our Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to continue in morning business for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the past 2 years, the Republican Party has enjoyed solid majorities in both the House and Senate. They control the schedule and they control the process. They can decide which legislation to call up for debate, and frankly, for all intents and purposes, they can decide whether anything gets done around here.

A good example is the nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court. If he had been treated like all other Supreme Court nominees throughout the entire history of this country in a Presidential election year, he would have received a hearing and a vote, and he almost certainly would have been easily confirmed, just as he was when he was nominated to the DC Court of Appeals. Instead, the Republican leadership did not even give Judge Garland a hearing, much less a vote. Republican Senators refused to do their job. And there are countless examples of this.

It would behoove people in this country who complain about the "do nothing" Congress to remind themselves that Congress is controlled by Republicans in both the House and the Senate. They can make it possible for work to get done if they want to, or they can make it impossible. Their track record for the past 2 years speaks for itself. Instead of a Congress that sets the standard for the world's democracies, we have been treated to a lesson of how not to get things done.

The latest example is the fiscal 2017 appropriations bills. I went back and reviewed the record. For months, the Republican leadership extolled the virtues of regular order, and I totally agreed with them on that. They spoke with great optimism and confidence about passing appropriations bills—in-

dividual bills, not even an omnibus bill that has become the norm. I agreed with the Republican leadership. They said over and over that they were going to do their job this year and pass these bills, the way we used to. We on the Democratic side fully supported Republicans in that goal. We negotiated 12 individual appropriations bills that were reported, with 1 exception, with bipartisan majorities—in most cases, overwhelming majorities—by the Senate Appropriations Committee. That was 5 months ago.

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I wrote the fiscal year 2017 State and foreign operations bill. As we always do, we wrote a balanced bill, and it was reported unanimously by the Appropriations Committee by a vote of 30 to 0. Our staffs have been meeting for weeks with their House counterparts to hammer out a conference agreement that the House and Senate can vote on and the President can sign. We could easily be finished by December 9, when the current funding resolution expires.

So what is the problem? It is simple. Donald Trump was elected President, and now the Republican leadership has a different idea. Forget all those uplifting speeches about passing appropriations bills. Forget about so-called regular order. Forget about doing our jobs. What is their new plan? Throw 10 months of work into the trash can. Now we will punt the ball down the field for another 4 months. After that, who knows? Maybe we will do it again and have a continuing resolution for the rest of the year. There is no way to predict.

For Members of Congress who may not be familiar with the intricate operations of Federal agencies and would prefer not to think about it, the idea of another 4-month continuing resolution may not be a big deal. For those of us on both sides of the aisle who do know, it is an example of government at its worst. Funding the government by continuing resolution means putting priorities and budgeting decisions on autopilot. It stops us having any kind of a voice in what our government does. It negates the hard work that has gone into reevaluating priorities from one year to the next. It negates the careful process of looking at Federal agencies account by account to make adjustments as warranted. It means largely making a carbon copy of an earlier appropriations bill or bills regardless of changed circumstances or compelling need to modify earlier priorities.

I can give all kinds of examples in the appropriations bills. Here are a few examples of what it means for the State and foreign operations bill, which comprises only 1 percent of the Federal budget.

A continuing resolution will provide \$433 million less than Senator GRAHAM's and my bill for economic development, governance, and security programs, such as the Power Africa Initiative. It will mean \$59 million less for

programs to counter violent extremism. These programs have strong bipartisan support—and did in the Appropriations Committee—because they are the building blocks for stability where we have critical national security interests that affect all Americans.

A continuing resolution will provide \$162 million less than our bill for global health, including for maternal and child health programs, such as vaccines for children, and to combat malaria and tuberculosis. These programs literally mean life or death for millions of people, which is why they have bipartisan support—or at least they did before the Republican leadership scrapped the appropriations bills that we passed with overwhelming bipartisan support.

In fact, one of the things a continuing resolution will do is provide \$454 million less than Senator GRAHAM's and my bill for security for U.S. diplomatic and consular personnel, for security upgrades to U.S. Embassies and facilities overseas, and for cyber security programs.

I mention that because the Republicans in the other body spent tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money decrying the lack of security at our embassies, even after they had already voted to cut money for embassy security, and now they are going to cut another \$454 million. Will they stop using their talking points about how we should spend more to protect our diplomats posted overseas? Of course not, because they hope the American people will not pay attention to the fact that they have cut another half billion dollars. When the Republican leadership blames others for not doing enough on security for our embassies and diplomats, as they have a habit of doing, they need to only look at themselves in the mirror.

At the same time, the continuing resolution provides \$538 million more for U.S. contributions to international financial institutions, than the amount Senator GRAHAM and I put in our bill. That is because the 2016 omnibus provided \$220 million for the Strategic Climate and Clean Technology Funds, which is not needed in fiscal year 2017 because the United States will not be contributing to either of those funds in fiscal year 2017.

The balance of \$318 million is not needed because U.S. contributions to several international financial institutions are lower in fiscal year 2017 than in fiscal year 2016. It boggles the mind. They cut money for the security of our diplomats and embassies, but then they spend half a billion dollars for contributions we don't need to make.

In fact, the continuing resolution provides \$161 million more than Senator GRAHAM's and my bill for contributions to international organizations. We don't need to pay that additional amount because of reductions in assessments in exchange rate costs. It would be nice if, instead of wasting this money on things we don't need, we used it to protect our embassies.

The continuing resolution will provide \$90 million more than our bill for assessed contributions to international peacekeeping. Again, we don't need to pay that additional amount because of reductions in several peacekeeping missions.

These are just examples for State and foreign operations. Every appropriations bill has its own laundry list of reasons why a continuing resolution makes no sense. It wastes taxpayer dollars and wreaks havoc for the agencies that run the government.

Continuing resolutions beyond a few months are illogical, wasteful, and harmful. We end up spending less for things both Republicans and Democrats strongly support, and we waste money on things we don't need and nobody wants. It is bad government 101. It is what the Republican leadership 10 months ago said they wanted to avoid, and we all agreed with them. But that was then and this is now. Now it's forget what we said before. We have changed our mind. Let's just put the government on autopilot and waste the money.

I heard Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, denouncing his colleagues for abandoning the regular appropriations process. He knows the problems it will create for the U.S. military.

Senator MIKULSKI, the vice chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, has called it "absolutely outrageous." She called it "procrastinating" instead of "legislating." I agree with her.

Another 4-month continuing resolution is completely unnecessary, not to mention outrageous, wasteful, and irresponsible. It can still be avoided. Speaking for State and foreign operations, we can complete our conference agreement in less than 1 week. We are perfectly willing to work into the evenings to do that. I suspect the other subcommittees could do the same or close to it. Certainly, we could finish these bills before Christmas.

So why don't we? That is what the Republican leadership said they wanted. That is what regular order is. That is how the Congress is supposed to work. We should do it. We ought to show the American people, for once, that we will actually do the job we were elected to do. That is what this Vermonter wants. I would hope others would also.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, are we in a parliamentary procedure to pro-

ceed with commentary on the Senate floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business, with 10-minute grants.

Mr. NELSON. May I be recognized?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

NIH FUNDING

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I want to talk about something we all hear about and generally support—that the National Institutes of Health needs help. It was founded in 1887. Its work and investments in the work of others have led to countless discoveries, including in Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and so many other chronic illnesses.

I visited this 300-acre campus in Bethesda, and it is jam-packed with buildings that are teeming with scientists and physicians. Yet that is just the tip of the iceberg because research is being conducted all over the country—indeed, all over the world—by the medical research grants that are given by NIH. This funded research has led to many discoveries and treatments that not only are allowing us to live healthier lives but also contribute to our knowledge and understanding of how diseases and the human body work. Take, for example, the BRAIN Initiative. NIH seeks to unravel the mysteries of the vastly complex human brain, which could allow us to understand an array of conditions affecting the brain.

When I visited yesterday, I met with Dr. Francis Collins, the head of NIH, and a plethora of his brilliant scientists who are working on neurodegenerative diseases—diseases such as concussions, ALS, Parkinson's, and all the many complicated things that come from this complicated organ called the brain. Well, they are on the verge of some real breakthroughs, but that comes at a cost. Dr. Collins stressed the need for consistent, robust funding for NIH.

In 2003, funding for NIH peaked and has since failed to keep up with inflation. In 2009 we came along with a stimulus bill that increased funding for NIH for only 2 years by approximately \$4 or \$5 billion a year over its base funding of \$24 to \$25 billion a year.

I will never forget when Dr. Collins told us—after the effect of that second year of the stimulus bill—that he had to cease 700 medical research grants sent out to the medical schools and research institutions all across the country because he simply did not have the money they had planned for, and thus there is the call for consistent and robust funding. Dr. Collins mentioned that the agency's biggest concern was a loss of young researchers. As the next generation of researchers are increasingly facing being denied research grants, they are leaving the research field. I don't think that is what this Nation wants. We need to ensure that