

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

NIH maintains a strong pipeline of researchers so that the critical work toward scientific discovery can continue.

This is not a partisan issue. Health and disease research is a bipartisan issue, and so we need to come together to support this consistent and robust funding. Even now, NIH is engaged in developing a prevention tool against the disease that was the dominant conversation last summer—the Zika virus. They are going into their first trials on a vaccine. Zika has affected more than 1,000 people in my State of Florida alone and more than 30,000 people in Puerto Rico. We need a vaccine, but the process of FDA trials takes time.

Now, just to prove that it is not confined to Puerto Rico and Florida, just yesterday the State of Texas reported the first case of locally transmitted Zika virus, which now makes it the second State to officially have local transmission after the State of Florida.

The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dr. Frieden, said that Zika could become endemic within our U.S. border, making it more important now than ever to have the Zika vaccine. That is just one other little example of what has been going on at NIH.

We are just about to consider a Cures bill, which has some more robust funding. The whole impetus for the Cures bill was NIH funding. A lot of other things had been attached. There is some controversy, but it would begin to authorize funding that would be stable over a 10-year period. If the United States is going to continue to be looked at as the leader of medical research around the world, we are going to have to provide for the funds for this great institution. We have already seen major breakthroughs in our lifetime, and this funding will help us to see some new incredible breakthroughs accomplished. You have heard of the Moonshot for cancer research. Look at the existing victories that have already been had in cancer research. We are now just on the cusp. What about diseases where we don't have a cure, such as ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis?

A big reason for my making this speech is for my friend Evan in Jacksonville. He is afflicted with this disease that affects the body's motor nerves. There is something that happens in the brain that does not send the signals all the way through the neurological system to the motor nerves. We first identified that in a famous baseball player, Lou Gehrig. There are 20,000 to 30,000 people in the country afflicted with this disease. We still don't know the reason for it nor have a cure, but yesterday I talked to three different physician scientists who have very promising leads for identifying a gene that has a direct connection to what happens in the brain when someone has ALS. They are trying to determine whether we could go in and clip out that gene so that our progeny would not have this concern.

We have seen what has happened in Alzheimer's. Did you see the 60 Minutes segment last Sunday in which there is this incredible space in Colombia, near Medellin, within a 100-mile diameter, where so many families get the onset of Alzheimer's during their forties, which is quite unusual. They have now identified a protein in the brain where, if you now know the gene that causes that protein, you could go ahead and alert people of the disease, and even though the effects of Alzheimer's has not come on, that person could start a therapy that would work against that protein in the brain. They are right on the cusp of these kinds of exciting discoveries that can help us to live healthier, longer lives.

I implore my colleagues in the Senate not to short-sheet the NIH and the funding that it so desperately needs.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

#### ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss legislation I introduced to eliminate the Electoral College and ensure that the candidate who wins the most votes will be elected President. Clearly, this has nothing to do with this past election. There are recounts going on, and we will see where that goes, but the bottom line is that this looks to the future.

The Presidency is the only office in America where the candidate who wins the most votes can still lose the election. There isn't any elected office in the Nation, be it county, city, State, or national level, where this is true. The person who gets more votes—one person, one vote—wins, but that is not true in the Presidential election.

I realized how little sense this made many years ago, but when I tried to explain it to my grandkids after this election, they said: Grandma, who won? Well, I told them, Donald Trump. Well, wait a minute, didn't Mrs. Clinton get more votes? Yes.

What if we did that in sports? I am a major basketball fan. What if the team that got the most points didn't win? What if that happened? What would people think? Well, why not? Well, because not everybody on the team touched the ball, therefore—even though they won by 40 points—they don't win.

This doesn't make sense. This is an outdated system that does not reflect democracy, and it violates the principle of one person, one vote. Every single American, regardless of what State they live in, should be guaranteed that their individual vote matters. Throughout our great history, we have had—this is the 45th President—five elections where the winner of the general election did not win the popular vote, but in our lifetime it has happened twice. We have had two in the last 16 years, and so it really needs to be addressed. This is more than an

anomaly. It looks like it could happen one way or the other. We don't know if a Republican or a Democrat gets seated.

Right now, Hillary Clinton's lead in the popular vote is 2.3 million votes. It is expected that she will win by probably more than 2.7 million votes. That would be more than the votes cast in Alaska, Delaware, Washington, DC, Hawaii, Vermont, and the Dakotas combined. We are not talking about a few votes; we are talking about 2.7 million votes—more than the votes cast in Alaska, Delaware, Washington, DC, Hawaii, Vermont, and the Dakotas combined. Clinton would have won the popular vote by a wider margin than not only Al Gore in 2000, but Richard Nixon in 1968 and John Kennedy in 1960.

In 2012 Donald Trump said, "The electoral college is a disaster for democracy." I couldn't agree more. I don't agree with too much of what Donald Trump says, but I sure agree with that. He said, "The electoral college is a disaster for democracy."

After the election, his views did not change:

"You know, I'm not going to change my mind just because I won. But I would rather see it where you went with simple votes."

These are all quotes of his.

"You know, you get 100 million votes and somebody else gets 90 million votes and you win."

After he said that, I think his advisers went a little nuts because by the next morning, he tweeted that the electoral college system was "actually genius." Then he also tweeted this, which was very interesting: "If the election were based on the total popular vote, I would have campaigned in New York, Florida, and California and won even bigger and more easily."

OK. Maybe that is true. Maybe that is true. His point is well-taken.

Presidential candidates should campaign in every single State. Actually, if we got rid of the electoral college, candidates would have to campaign in every State because the vote of every American would matter regardless of where they live. If you get all the popular vote in one State, you will add to your popular vote at the end.

According to nationalpopularvote.com, 94 percent of campaigning by the Presidential candidates in 2016 took place in 12 States—12 States. That was it. Two-thirds of these general election campaign events took place in six States.

In 2015 Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin said: "The nation as a whole is not going to elect the next president. Twelve states are." Just think about that. "The nation as a whole is not going to elect the next president."

He was right when he said that in 2015. He was right.

So what message does that send to the people who live in the populous States, like my State, where 39 million Americans live? What message does that send to the 27 million Americans who live in Texas? What message does