

right woman at the right time. Senators on both sides of the aisle agree. So I urge each of my colleagues to rise to the occasion and swiftly confirm our next CIA Director.

TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, with Republican policies shaking the regulatory rust off of the U.S. economy, American job creators, entrepreneurs, and working families have been thinking big again.

For 8 years, Democrats pushed a one-size-fits-all agenda that heaped outsized benefits on the largest cities and left the rest of the country struggling to catch up. Now Main Street businesses across America feel the wind is at their backs. So they are expanding their operations, buying more equipment, and hiring new workers.

For too long, taxpayers grappled with an outdated Federal Tax Code that seemed to keep more of their hard-earned income every year. Now, thanks to Republican tax reform, working families are seeing paychecks grow, special bonuses hit their bank accounts, and will send thousands of dollars less to the IRS next year.

Now that Congress and the President have put a stop to the last administration's rampant, top-down Federal rule-making, U.S. manufacturing is churning back to life as well. The new economic climate that is taking hold across the country has producers feeling more confident about planting deeper roots right here in the United States—new capital investment, new factories, new American jobs.

Novelis, a leading producer of rolled and recycled aluminum, broke ground just this week on a new factory in Guthrie, KY. The company is choosing the Commonwealth in which to build the 400,000-square-foot facility and create at least 125 new jobs, and they are not keeping any secrets about what is helping them make this investment. Here is a quote: "A favorable economic environment," including "the significant positive impact of tax reform in the U.S., reinforces Novelis' decision to expand at this time."

This is not just a Kentucky phenomenon. According to new survey data from the National Association of Manufacturers, more than 93 percent of U.S. manufacturing firms have a positive outlook. Already, 77 percent of manufacturers are reporting hiring new workers, and 86 percent say they are investing in plants and equipment.

Many American communities revolve around these manufacturing facilities. Sadly, during the Obama years, they were among the most likely to be left behind by the so-called "recovery," but now that is changing. Today, manufacturing wages are growing at their fastest pace in 17 years. These are just a few signs of our Nation's economic comeback under Republicans' pro-growth, pro-opportunity agenda.

Remember, not one of our Democratic colleagues voted with us to set

this train in motion—not one. They voted against cutting redtape for American manufacturers. They voted against the tax reforms that are growing paychecks and helping to create new jobs. They voted against the newly lowered utility rates that benefit both families and employers.

My Democratic colleagues like to talk about supporting the middle class. These days, it is looking more and more like that is all it is—just talk. Yet, while they occupy themselves with partisan politics, Republicans will keep on clearing the tracks and letting the American economy roll on ahead.

TRIBUTE TO BRENDAN DUNN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, speaking of tax reform, I have to bid farewell to an outstanding member of my staff.

Brendan Dunn has been a key member of my leadership office team for the last 6 years. He has made an outsized impact as a trusted counselor and friend.

I, actually, stole Brendan from the Finance Committee in 2012. I am not sure if Chairman HATCH ever quite forgave me for it. If you have ever had the pleasure of witnessing Brendan in action, you will understand why he is a sought-after commodity, whether you need deep expertise on tax policy or the perfect movie quote for any occasion.

Brendan has been my trusted adviser on issues including tax policy, banking, trade, and pensions. So I am just glad that his last few months in the office could be a calm and laid-back period. All he had to do was play a leading role in crafting generational tax reform and help steer it across the finish line. Oh, then came Dodd-Frank reform, for good measure.

This Maryland native holds degrees from Holy Cross, Fordham, Georgetown, and Notre Dame, but you would not know that this unassuming leader and reliable source of comic relief holds a J.D. and a Ph.D. in political philosophy unless you needed to. That is the kind of guy Brendan is.

His many contributions to my team have benefited this body, the people of Kentucky, and the Nation. I know everyone who has gotten to work closely with him is sad to see him depart the Senate. I certainly am. Yet I have a hunch that his lovely wife, Lee, and his children—Patrick, Audrey, and Mary—will not mind seeing a little bit more of him.

So I offer Brendan my sincere thanks for a job very well done and wish him Godspeed for what lies ahead.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 36.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. Con. Res. 36, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2019 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2020 through 2028.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be 45 minutes under the control of Senator PAUL or his designee and 45 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, this year there will be no budget presented by the Republicans or the Democrats. I think that is a bad idea. I think the government should have a budget. There should be a document that says what we are for, what we are against, and how we are going to spend our money. I think it is particularly important because we are incurring so much debt.

We may remember when Republicans campaigned against enormous spending by President Obama and \$1 trillion annual deficits. Now we are faced with enormous spending and \$1 trillion annual deficits from Republicans. I think it is important that we have a discussion about this.

Do we have too much debt? Some will say: Well, I have debt for my house, and that is not bad. The country has a lot of debt that they borrow against capital expenditures—things that don't expire. I think there is some truth to that. You can have a manageable amount of debt, particularly if it is against something you are borrowing that doesn't go away. But if you are borrowing money for the grocery store or for your apartment, that might be a bad thing. It will not last very long. You will do it for a month or two, and pretty soon the bank will come calling. So there is a point at which debt is too cumbersome, and there is too much of it.

Carmen Reinhart of the University of Maryland and Kenneth Rogoff of Harvard did a study linking debt to economic growth. They concluded that when a country exceeds 90 percent of their GDP, when their debt is almost

equal to their GDP, economic growth begins to slow, and you lose probably 1 to 2 points just because of the burden of the debt. This is all of the debt—what the government owes to the public at large and to themselves. They said that when it exceeds 90 percent, it is a problem. Currently, our debt is at 105 percent; our gross public debt is 105 percent of our GDP.

We now have a national debt of about \$21 trillion. Historically, Congress had sort of a cover on this. Congress would try to rein in the debt. There would be a big debate every time we raised the debt ceiling. Congress would have to lift it each time, and there was some punishment out there for those who voted to raise the debt ceiling.

Now we don't raise the debt ceiling by a certain amount because that became embarrassing and limiting, making them come back each time to try to raise the debt ceiling. Now what we do is raise it for a period of time.

Currently, the debt ceiling has been raised, and you can spend as much as you want for a little over a year. We did it, I believe, back in December. For about 1½ years, the government can borrow as much as they can possibly borrow for that period of time. Basically, there is no limit. The debt ceiling vote has become a meaningless vote because we just raise it for a period of time.

Is the debt a problem? How much interest do we pay on the debt? We pay \$300 billion in interest. You say: Well, is that a problem? Paying on the interest crowds out other things that you want from the government. So when people come to my office and say "I want this from my government," I say "Well, part of the problem is we are paying \$300 billion in interest, and part of the problem is we don't have anything to give you because we are borrowing about 25 percent of every dollar we spend."

Every time the government spends a dollar, 25 percent of that is borrowed. This is on current accounts of things people want. For example, if I were to ask you: Is it a good idea to borrow money to give to your church? People say: Well, my church is a good thing, and I want to give money to my church. But is it a good idea and will it last very long if you go to the bank to borrow 25 percent of every dollar you spend and tithe 25 percent to your church? You say: My church is a good thing. But is it a good thing to borrow that money, and will the bank keep loaning you that money, and are there repercussions to having so much debt?

We have a \$300 billion interest payment at about a 2-percent interest rate. The interest rate is manipulated by the Federal Reserve, and there are those who report that the main reason the interest rates are kept low by the Federal Reserve is not necessarily to stimulate economic growth; it is to finance this enormous burden of debt.

What happens when interest rates normalize? Many are predicting they

will. As economic growth begins to pick up, you are going to see an acceleration in interest rates. What happens at 5 percent? Can we even manage our debt at 5 percent?

People have looked at what the interest will be, even saying interest rates stay stable, and they say that within about a decade, interest rates will exceed all other payments of the government. The estimate is that within 10 years, interest payments alone will be about \$761 billion—greater than national defense, greater than any other area of the budget. Even now, the second biggest item in the budget after defense is interest.

So some say: But we have to finance the military, and the military needs more money. That is why you hear Republicans now no longer caring about the debt. They got more money for the military, but they had to make an unholy alliance with Democrats and give them more for social welfare. So we have guns and butter. Everybody gets what they want—except for the taxpayer and those of us who care about the debt.

So the debt has exploded now under Republican control. You say: Well, don't we need it for the military?

Well, I think there are some arguments we should probably engage in before we decide that. We have doubled the amount in nominal terms that we spend on the military since 9/11. In real terms, there is about a 36-percent increase in national defense. We spend more on the military than the next eight countries combined.

There is an argument that it isn't necessarily that the budget has not grown enough, but it is that maybe the military mission is too large. Maybe it is not that the budget is too small but that our military mission is too large, that we are at war in too many places around the globe and that we should reassess that.

Many Republicans will say: Well, that is all good and well, but really the culprit is entitlements.

Entitlements are growing at 6 percent—Social Security, Medicare, food stamps. There is truth to that, but watch closely the people who tell you that the problem is entitlements and ask yourself if they are doing anything to fix entitlements. Ask them whether they have put forward a bill on the floor of the Senate to rein in spending and entitlements. Ask them whether they have even cosponsored a bill or whether they are agitating for a bill to rein in entitlements. No. They are petrified of looking at entitlements. So everybody complains about it, and nobody does anything about it.

Everybody says they are for a balanced budget. Yet, when we have a vote in a few minutes on a budget that actually balances in 5 years, consistent with the balanced budget amendment, I think we will get a handful—maybe a dozen or maybe two dozen. But the majority of Republicans will say: Oh my goodness, we could never cut spending.

So in the abstract, they are for a balanced budget. They are for a balanced budget amendment. They will all vote for it. They will all come down here. I think we had a unanimous vote a few years ago. Republicans all voted for the balanced budget amendment. Just a month ago in the House, all the people who voted to bust the budget caps, all the people who voted for the extra spending, all these Republicans then voted for the balanced budget amendment, which says you have to balance in 5 years. Typically, when they have brought forward a budget, they have tried to balance it in 10 years and struggled. So they vote for a balanced budget amendment that balances in 5 years, and yet they struggle to come up with a budget that is not fake to balance in 10 years.

We passed a budget last year. It was a Republican budget. I voted against it because I think it had fake cuts in it, and it had fake reporting, and they weren't serious about it. I will give an example. The budget last year that the Republicans passed had about \$4 trillion in entitlement savings over 10 years. You say: Well, did they enact any of that? Zero. Do they have any bills to do any entitlement reform? Zero. Did we ever debate and vote on any bills that would have done anything to entitlement spending? No. In fact, in the first year of the Republican budget last year, there was \$96 billion—that is a significant savings—all in entitlements, and yet nobody had a bill that even went to committee. There was never a committee vote. There was never a floor vote. No one lifted a finger to do anything about entitlement spending.

So it is a canard for those who say: Well, the real problem is not military; the real problem is not nonmilitary discretionary; the real problem is entitlements. Sure, entitlements are growing faster, but unless we are doing something about it, it is simply saying: Oh, we have to keep spending over here because the real problem is over here, but we are not going to do anything over here, which runs into really the hypocrisy that we face today.

I have often said that the Republican Party is an empty vessel unless we imbue it with value. We say we are against big spending. We say we are against big government. We say we are for devolving power, structure, and money back to the States. Yet the government grows under Democrats and it grows under Republicans.

Democrats are sometimes more honest about wanting to grow government. They will go home and say they are going to make government big enough to put a ham on every table, a chicken in every pot. They are a little bit more honest about it. Republicans go home and say they believe in the free market. They go to the Rotary Club and say: Well, I voted for the balanced budget amendment. But the question is, Why won't they vote for an actual budget that balances? Why won't they

vote for a budget that actually is consistent with the balanced budget amendment?

So what I have done is put forward my own budget. It is something I have talked about for several years now. It wasn't originally my idea; others have talked about it. It is called the penny plan. It says that we would cut one penny out of every dollar the Federal Government spends—1 percent. Could we not get to a point where we could actually cut one penny out of every dollar? Isn't there enough waste going on in government that we could actually cut a penny out of every dollar?

Like everything else, people argue the numbers. There is a lot of fake math that goes on around here. Those on the left will say, oh, but this will be cutting \$13 trillion, when, in fact, it might not cut any. For example, if we were to freeze government spending for 10 years, the left would say: You have cut spending by \$15 trillion because we were going to increase spending by \$15 trillion. So it is sort of fake accounting. If we spend \$3.2 trillion and next year we spend \$32 billion less, that is a 1-percent cut, but the left will say: Oh, no, we were going to increase spending by 6 percent, and so you are really cutting spending by 7 percent. This enormous number comes up, but in reality, we are taking last year's spending—\$3.2 trillion—and we are going to cut it by 1 percent, \$30 billion. If we do that every year for 5 years, the budget balances.

You say: Well, some people might not get all their money. Yes, there would be some programs across government that would get less. I challenge any American to call up my office and present proof that there is not 1 percent waste and fraud in any program going on. I will give an example. The earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit are estimated to have 25 percent fraud. For years, you could get this credit without a Social Security number. You could simply say: My kids and I don't have one. The government would generate a taxpayer ID number for you and give you a refund. This is to the tune of billions of dollars. It is about \$100 billion in the EITC, the earned-income tax credit, and the additional child credit—many of those going to people who were in our country illegally and had no Social Security number.

There is waste from top to bottom in government. How would you ever find it? See, many people in this body on both sides of the aisle will say: I am for rooting out waste. Yet you never find waste if you keep giving them more money. If you reward government agencies with more money, you are never going to get less waste.

The penny plan budget I am presenting would cut 1 percent. Does anybody in America think government couldn't do with 1 percent less? Many American families have had a bad year here and there and have to deal with more than 1 percent less. One percent

of this enormous government, if it were cut each year, would go a long way toward making us a stronger nation.

People say: Well, what about the military? I think that if the government ran a balanced budget, we would have a stronger and more secure nation. Admiral Mullen said he thought the No. 1 threat to our national security was actually our debt. So there are many realistic people, even high-ranking people in the military, who are saying: You know what, if we want to secure our Nation, we have to make sure that we have a sound economy and that we have a sound government that is not borrowing so much money.

How rapidly do we borrow money? We borrow \$1 million every minute—\$1 million a minute. In fact, it is a little bit higher than that now. It is about \$1.5 million, and the curve over the next 10 years gets to about \$2 million a minute. Imagine how fast the money is flying out of here. How big is \$1 million? People have said that if you put hundred-dollar bills in your hand, it is about 4 inches high to get to \$1 million. We are borrowing \$1 million or more every minute.

How would we get to \$30 billion? How could we possibly cut \$30 billion from the budget? I will give examples of where some of the money is.

Foreign aid is about \$30 billion. You say: Well, I want to help the poor people in the world. I am all for you. If you want to give out of your savings to help poor people around the world, all the benefit and all the accolades for being generous, but if you want to borrow money, you won't be able to do it for very long.

Should the U.S. Government borrow? We are going to borrow \$1 trillion this year. Should we borrow money to send it to poor countries, or should we borrow money to send armaments to countries? I think it is a big mistake. That is about \$30 billion. So if you were to cut 1 percent next year, you could actually cut 1 percent by simply eliminating foreign aid.

How much do we spend in Afghanistan building their roads, building their bridges, building their schools before they blow them up again and then we rebuild them again? We have rebuilt some buildings in Afghanistan seven times. That is nearly \$50 billion, which is about a year, year and a half, of the penny plan right there if we were to say: Guess what. We won the Afghan war, and we are not going to stay forever. We have some needs here at home that we are going to take care of and not send all that money to Afghanistan.

Corporate welfare. Rich corporations in our country—I am all for them. If they freely sell something to you and they make money because you like their product and buy it, more power to them, but if they want money from the Federal Government, that is ridiculous. I don't think private business should be getting any money from the Federal Government. It is estimated

that corporate welfare is over \$100 billion. I know for certain that we could find enough corporate welfare that we could actually, by eliminating corporate welfare, do 1 year of the penny plan.

Waste. Our office alone has found \$3 billion in waste.

Interest. It is \$300 billion, going up to \$760 billion.

There are a lot of areas in our government that we could actually look at and actually adhere to the penny plan and balance our budget. I would like to go through a few items.

If there is anybody in America who believes their government is not wasting their money, I would like to show them a few areas where the government is wasting their money.

My staff recently went to Afghanistan. This is a picture of a luxury hotel that your taxpayer dollars went to build. Your first question might be why your taxpayer dollars would be going to a luxury hotel in some Third World country. It is about 400 feet from our Embassy, and this is what it looks like. They have been building it for 11 years, and it is unfinished. Nothing was done to code, it is falling down, and at this point, the hotel is so dangerous that we have to send our soldiers to patrol it to make sure snipers aren't using the hotel to shoot at our Embassy. So it is not only a waste of \$90 million, never having been completed, but it is now a danger to our troops. The talk now is on how they are going to fix the problem.

Does anybody in Washington think we should spend less in Afghanistan? Virtually no one. Both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, can't spend money fast enough in Afghanistan. No one is making a stand and saying: Enough is enough. It is time to announce that we won, and it is time to come home. The money just keeps going, good money after bad—\$90 million for a hotel that will never be built.

To add insult to injury, do you know what they are going to do now? They are talking about selling the unfinished hotel. Do you know who they are going to sell it to? Another branch of government. So government built this—U.S. taxpayer dollars built this—and now they are going to sell it to the State Department. Do you know what the State Department is going to do with this luxury hotel in Kabul? They are going to tear it down. So that is \$90 million flushed down the toilet.

You can't tell me this waste isn't rotting in our government from top to bottom, and it is never rooted out. Why? Because we never give any agency less money; everybody gets more money. If you are running an agency or business and someone gives you more money, are you more likely to root out waste or less likely to root out waste? The only way they would ever root out waste is if they got a commandment—thou shalt do this—from Congress, from the Senate, to say: Enough is

enough. Let's declare victory and come home.

This hotel—\$90 million flushed down the toilet. It is now a danger to our troops, and they are going to tear it down. It was never completed.

Also, in Afghanistan, there is brandnew equipment that we send over there that is shredded. They have big, huge industrial shredders. My staff saw them. They found boxes of new equipment—electrical outlet boxes, all kinds of things—being shoved into the shredder. So we buy brandnew equipment, and it is shoved into the shredder. There is \$50 million of brandnew, never-used equipment that has been destroyed. This doesn't even count the old stuff we are destroying. There are reports that \$7 billion—7 with a "b," billion dollars—of used equipment, such as tanks, humvees, et cetera, has been destroyed. Why? Our allies are so unreliable, we are afraid that if we leave a tank or a humvee there, it might be taken by the opposition and used against us. So we have destroyed \$7 billion of it because it is cheaper to destroy it than to load it on planes and bring it over here. That is \$7 billion.

The Department of Defense loses \$29 million of heavy equipment. What does that mean? They can't find it. It can't be accounted for. They don't know where the equipment is. There is \$29 million unaccounted for in heavy equipment.

They tried to establish an Afghan equivalent for the Army Corps of Engineers and lost \$20 million of heavy equipment in the process.

There is \$28 million worth of uniforms that are missing. Someone got paid. We can't find the uniforms. We can't prove that anyone ever got the uniforms.

Even more troubling than that, there was \$700,000 worth of ammunition missing. You would think we could at least keep up with ammunition. Do you think that might be a danger and an insult to our young men and women we send to Afghanistan, that we can't account for where the ammunition is? I think if you can't account for it, there is a decent chance the enemy has your ammunition or rogue elements in the Afghan Government—which could be anyone—have sold it on the black market to make money.

Where does your money go? I want you to realize as Americans where your money is going. They spent \$500,000 to study if selfies make you happier. You take selfies of yourself smiling, then you look at them to see if that makes you happier. Now, you may want to do this on your own time, but do you want to spend \$500,000 of taxpayer money when we are a trillion dollars short?

This stuff has been going on with the National Science Foundation since the 1970s. William Proxmire was a Senator back in the 1970s—a conservative Democrat or a Democrat of some stripe. He used to do the Golden Fleece Award. Many of them went to the National Science Foundation around 1972. He

complained about it for 10 years before he retired. I have been complaining about it for 6 years.

What do the Republicans and Democrats do? They say: Oh, it is science. You wouldn't know, sir, about science. We have to give them more money. You are not smart enough to know there is a lot of science in taking selfies. We could learn something really important, and it is so important for the future of mankind to learn whether selfies of people smiling will help the world in the end.

NIH. Everybody loves the NIH. They can do no wrong. NIH did a \$2 million study to see whether, if you are following somebody in the cafeteria line and the guy or woman in front of you sneezes on the food, you are more or less likely to take the food. Really? I think we could have polled the audience on that. I mean, how ridiculous is that? Money like that—particularly when there are things the government needs to do. There is a trillion-dollar deficit, and we spend \$2 million studying what your reaction is to people sneezing on the food?

Then \$356,000 of your money was spent studying whether Japanese quail are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. These guys have some great studies. This is, once again, I believe, the National Science Foundation. Hurray for the National Science Foundation. I know I am going to get hate mail from them. They spent \$356,000 to study whether Japanese quail are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. You can't make this stuff up.

The reform I have proposed is that we have a taxpayer advocate on the committee to determine who gets these grants. Do you know what they say? We can't have any nonscientists. They wouldn't understand the science. I want the scientist who did this to come forward and explain why we need this study. There is no point to us spending this money. There could have been something better.

I offered one thing to try to fix it. Put a taxpayer advocate on the committee approving grants, and I think we should have a scientist who isn't in that field. This is sort of behavioral science for Japanese quail, I guess. We need to have somebody who studies diabetes, heart disease, cancer, AIDS—some of the diseases that affect more people. They need to be on the committee because they need to be scratching their heads saying: We can spend it on Japanese quail and their sexual habits or we can spend it on diabetes. The taxpayer advocate could say: We can spend it on Japanese quail or maybe we can reduce the debt. Maybe both could happen. Maybe we could reduce the debt and try to do only better scientific projects.

This one looks like something you really want your government to spend money on. They spent \$150,000 to investigate supernatural events in Alaska. They can look at unexplained lights, animals with transformative powers,

all kinds of different mythological animals, landscape features that had special powers, and, of course, you wouldn't want to leave out sea monsters. People say: What is \$150,000? That is the problem with government. Milton Friedman had it right when he said: "Nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as he spends his own." Why does nobody care about the \$150,000? Because it wasn't their money to spend. This is the problem with government at-large and why the government is never good at anything they do. They are terribly ineffective because they are spending somebody else's money.

Government should be so small that they have less room to make errors like this. We should devolve most of the power of this place back to the States. That is what our Founding Fathers intended, and we should try to say we are not going to tolerate this kind of stuff.

This \$250,000 was spent to send 24 kids from Pakistan to Space Camp and Dollywood. My first question would be: Is there anybody in America who didn't get to go to Dollywood or Space Camp last year? I think when everybody in America has gone, we might consider sending some Pakistani kids. Frankly, there is nothing in the Constitution that says we should be sending Pakistani kids to Dollywood. There is nothing wrong if you want to send your kids from Pakistan to Dollywood—by all means. You should not take taxpayer money to do things like this.

May I ask the Presiding Officer how much time I have remaining of my 45 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). There is 19 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Thank you.

This is here in Washington, about a mile from here. We call it a "Streetcar Named Waste." Spending \$1.6 million to study the expansion of the DC streetcar—and this is a streetcar that nobody is actually riding on. It is a ghost car. Nobody is riding on it. It goes nowhere. It goes about a mile, from nowhere to nowhere, and is much slower than walking. I walked, and I can outwalk it. We thought about filming me in a race with the streetcar to see who wins, me walking or it driving; once again, going back to some technology from hundreds of years ago that still requires wires to be running down the street, and it is really not a useful expense of government money. DC gets a lot of Federal money.

Where else do they spend your money? This is one of my favorites. I just can't even imagine who spent this money. When I tell you, you will say: Certainly, that person was fired. No way. He works for the Federal Government. Nobody is ever fired in the Federal Government. They spent \$700,000 to study what Neil Armstrong said when he landed on the Moon. Did he say, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind," or did he say, "One small step for a man"? They wanted to

study whether the preposition “a” was mentioned by Neil Armstrong or whether he said: “One small step for man.” Where did the money come from? The grant was originally supposed to be for autism. We can debate whether the Federal Government should be involved in that. It sounds like a much more just study if it had something to do with autism than studying Neil Armstrong’s statement on the Moon.

You can’t make this stuff up. This is incredibly ridiculous, but it should be insulting. There should not be a taxpayer at home in America who says: All right. Today they are going to vote on a budget to cut one penny out of every dollar. We spent \$700,000 on what Neil Armstrong did or did not say on the Moon. You know what their conclusion at the end was? They don’t know. It is inconclusive. They listened to the tape over and over again. Someone should be fired.

It also should be a message to our body that we should cut some spending. Instead, we have done the opposite. Under Republican control of the Senate and the House, we busted the budget caps by \$300 billion just 2 months ago. Part of what my plan would do would be to restore the caps. They are put in place for a reason, to try to control our proclivity to spend too much money. We put the budget caps in place, then we cut 1 percent a year—about \$30 billion every year for 5 years, and then the government would begin to grow again at about 1 percent.

I know we could live within our means. What would happen is this guy would be fired, and that kind of study would not happen when they have 1 percent less. Maybe a program like the National Science Foundation would get 50 percent less or 75 percent less to really put them on notice that we are tired, after 30 years of crazy research, of them continuing without reform.

This was also spent in Afghanistan. This is your money. They used \$850,000 to set up a televised cricket league. The first problem is, most people don’t have TVs in Afghanistan. Really, a televised cricket league? They don’t even have TVs to watch it on. This is \$850,000 to make them feel better about their National Cricket League. Boondoggle. It has nothing to do with national defense. It makes us weaker by putting us further into debt.

Will this get better if we continue to increase money? No, it only gets worse. If you give them more money, they will spend it. In fact, we have studied spending at the end of the year. When you get to the end of the year, the government spends money four to five times faster than any other month in the year. The last 30 days of the fiscal year spending increases every day. In fact, on the last day of the fiscal year, you can watch spending accelerate as the Sun sets in the West. As offices begin to close in the East, the spending shifts to the Midwest. As the Sun sets farther in the western sky and the of-

fices are still open in California, they are spending money as fast as they can. If they don’t spend it, they will not get it next year—use it or lose it.

It is a phenomenon of government that has been going on forever. This kind of stuff happens. As long as you give them more money, they will do it. As long as they are rewarded for doing the spending, we should study which agencies do it. We should study which agencies go to Las Vegas and have their conference there for a million dollars, sipping champagne in a hot tub. That agency should get less money. I think those people actually did get fired—one of the few people ever fired.

We could have a debate on another occasion about climate change, but we probably agree that a \$450,000 app for your phone so you can play a climate change game that will, I guess, attempt to convince you and ensure that you are convinced that we are having climate change—\$450,000 for an app on a phone. Apps are everywhere. People are developing them all the time. Government doesn’t need to be spending \$450,000 for what somebody probably spends \$1,000 in their garage to develop.

Remember ObamaCare, when they tried to set up the website with millions of dollars, and then it failed? Remember the IRS just 3 weeks ago failing? We need to be very careful about giving government more money.

The budget I am introducing is called the penny plan budget. It cuts one penny out of every dollar. This is important for the country to see we are having this vote. They are not that excited to have this vote. We are only having this vote because the Senate rules basically mandate it. It can’t be avoided because Republicans didn’t create a budget. Democrats didn’t create a budget. So I decided, what the heck, I will create my own budget.

The penny plan budget has come forward. If we were to pass this, there are many good things. Through a simple majority, we could do many good things that conservative Republicans have wanted, like make the tax cuts permanent, and get rid of more regulations. We could do the REINS Act, which would say, new regulations that are very expensive have to be voted on by Congress. We should cut out more waste. There are all kinds of things we could do.

What we have chosen to do in our budget is actually give instructions to expand health savings accounts. One of the big problems we have in healthcare is rising costs. Costs are going up about 25 percent a year. The answer around here has been, I think, lame, uneducated, ill-informed, and counterproductive. Other than that, they are right on target. What they are trying to say is: Oh, your individual rates are going up 25 percent a year. Here is some money so you can pay for it. It does nothing to bring the curve down. It may accelerate the curve. If you subsidize something, it will become more

expensive. You are subsidizing the demand for it. We ought to expand health savings accounts where people pay for their healthcare. People say: I don’t want to pay for my healthcare. When you pay—when you have skin in the game—you ask the price of things. When the government pays or somebody else pays, you don’t ask the price of things, and the price rises.

Competition is the fundamental aspect of capitalism, but you have to have freely fluctuating prices, which we don’t in Medicare, Medicaid, and actually mostly private insurance. We have never really adjusted the fundamental problem of healthcare, which is that we don’t have capitalism in healthcare.

What do we do? Because we don’t have enough capitalism, we take more capitalism away and add more government, and it is more broken since we have done Obamacare. One of the answers—since many Republicans will not vote to repeal ObamaCare—is let us try to start expanding the marketplace.

My budget today could pass if every Republican voted for it. If it passes, we could move on to doing something like expanding the health savings accounts. This gets to an argument that is an inside baseball argument that happens in Washington. They will tell you: Young man, you must vote for our budget because the budget is simply a vehicle to do other good things. I look back at him and say: If it is a vehicle, and you don’t care what is in it, why not put something good in it? We always put something crappy in it that never works, never balances, and does not represent who we are as a party. They shove it down our throat and say: Vote for it. You have to do it because that is the only way to get to a tax cut. That is the only way we get to repeal ObamaCare, although they are not really for that anymore. But the thing is, they can do it by voting for something they actually are for. Everyone in our caucus is for the balanced budget amendment. If we put it forward on the floor, they will all vote for it, but there will not be enough votes for it to be law, so it is a free vote. This would be the actual platform, the actual symbol of what we run on and what we do next year. Yet we will not have a chance to do that unless they are willing to do it.

They want the budget to be meaningless. They want it to be a vehicle, but then they want it to be their meaningless symbol, and I can’t do that. I think there has to be someone left in the Republican Party who says enough is enough. We are not going to not tolerate the waste, spending, and debt, and we are going to say the same things we said to President Obama: Big government spending and debt are wrong.

I don’t think we should change this because we are in power. When the Republican Party is out of power, they are the conservative party. But the

problem is, when the Republican Party is in power, there is no conservative party. What I am arguing for today is that we should be who we say we are. I urge a “yes” vote on the penny plan budget.

Madam President, I will reserve the remainder of my time if I can get an update of what I have left.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 9 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Perfect. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. PAUL. I will reserve the bulk of my time that is remaining and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to use leader time.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you, Madam President.

Before I get into the substance of my remarks, I always listen diligently to my friend from Kentucky. There is a number that is missing in his charts; it is 1.5 trillion. The reason we don't like government spending is—he thinks—a lot of it is wasteful, but, ultimately, the reason is also that there is a huge deficit.

Our side scratches our heads not only with our friend from Kentucky, but with everyone on the other side who rails about too much government spending and creation of the deficit when they created the deepest hole they could have with the tax break that could have been paid for by closing loopholes. A group—a bipartisan group—had put something together that would have reduced the corporate rate to 25 percent, brought the money from overseas at 8, 9 percent, increased the child tax credit, left the individual side alone, and would have barely increased the deficit. So our side, at least, rankles when we hear these budgets that relate to deficit spending when, on the tax side, that doesn't seem to apply at all.

I say that with due respect to my good friend, who I know is sincere in his beliefs. He will argue with me that cutting taxes increases the economy. I would say that spending money on education and infrastructure also increases the economy. It is a slippery slope once you say: We can cut all the taxes we want; the deficit doesn't matter. It would be like our side saying: You can spend all the money you want; the deficit doesn't matter. We don't quite say that.

I thank my friend.

NET NEUTRALITY

Madam President, yesterday was a good day for the future of the internet. Democrats forced the Senate to take an important step closer to restoring net neutrality. It is another step closer to ensuring that large internet service providers don't get to hold all the cards, another step closer to protecting equality of access to the internet. In doing so, Senate Democrats stood with the 86 percent of Americans who oppose the repeal of net neutrality.

I am proud to say that Senator MARKEY's Congressional Review Act resolution passed yesterday afternoon with the votes of every single Democrat, as well as three of our Republican colleagues. I thank Senators COLLINS, MURKOWSKI, and KENNEDY for supporting this fine legislation.

Here is what my friend the Republican Senator from Louisiana had to say after the vote:

If you trust your cable company, you won't like my vote. If you don't trust your cable company, you will like my vote.

He is right. It is that simple. So you have to wonder why 47 Republicans voted no yesterday. Do they trust the cable companies and the large ISPs to do what is level best for the average American family? Do they believe that cable companies are really popular with the American people? I don't think so.

Now Republicans in the House have to take up this bipartisan resolution. We hope they will.

This isn't some partisan stunt. Absolutely not. It is a real, bipartisan effort to right the FCC's wrong and protect the free and open internet. It is very crucial to the future of the country.

House Republicans don't have to choose the same path that the vast majority of Republicans in the Senate decided to follow. Speaker RYAN should bring this up for a vote immediately. The American people have spoken. The Senate has spoken. Speaker RYAN should listen and bring the net neutrality CRA to the floor of the House.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Madam President, 1 year ago, former FBI Director Robert Mueller was appointed to lead the FBI's investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election. Of course, the investigation began long before that. According to the New York Times, it began in the middle of 2016 as a result of information we received from the Australian Ambassador, who told the FBI that Russian intelligence was working to share information with the Trump campaign.

At that time, we heard a lot about the FBI's investigation of Hillary Clinton's emails, but remarkably, we heard nothing about this other investigation. Now we know that one of those two investigations is much more serious than the other one was. We also know that if it were a witch hunt—as the President seems to think it is—if they were out

to get him, they certainly would have leaked information about that during the election campaign. They didn't.

The probe led by Special Counsel Mueller, a Republican and decorated marine veteran, concerns the campaign of a hostile foreign power to interfere in and influence the outcome of an American election. There is nothing—nothing—more serious to the integrity of a democracy than the guarantee of free and fair elections.

The Founding Fathers warned about foreign interference. When I used to read that clause in high school, I said: What do they mean? That is not going to happen. Well, they were a lot smarter than we are—as always. They knew this danger. Here it is, 2018, and we see how real it is. It is the core of the special counsel's investigation.

The investigation has already yielded multiple indictments and guilty pleas. Yesterday the Senate Intelligence Committee, in a bipartisan manner, confirmed that Russia sought to interfere with our elections, sow discord, and tip the scales toward Donald Trump and against Secretary Clinton. The Trump administration itself has even taken punitive action against Russia's actors named in Mueller's investigation.

I salute the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, the Republican Senator from North Carolina, for being straightforward about this. Not so many on the other side of the aisle are.

Yet, again this morning, President Trump called the investigation a “disturbing, illegal, and unwarranted witch hunt . . . the greatest witch hunt in American history.” The rhetoric this man uses is amazing.

I say to the President: It is not a witch hunt when 17 Russians have been indicted. It is not a witch hunt when some of the most senior members of the Trump campaign have been indicted. It is not a witch hunt when Democrats and Republicans agree with the intelligence community that Russia interfered in our election to aid President Trump.

Any fair-minded citizen, even the most ardent partisan, should be able to look at the facts and say that this investigation is not a witch hunt. The FBI Director, Christopher Wray, appointed by President Trump, a Republican, said as much yesterday.

Truly, we should all be aghast, on this 1-year anniversary of Mueller's appointment, at the smear campaign by the President and his allies. We should all be aghast at the relentless parade of conspiracies manufactured by the most extreme elements of the Republican Party and conservative media to distract from the special counsel's investigation. From “deep state” leaks to unmasking requests, phone taps at Trump Tower, Uranium One, Nunes's midnight run to the White House, and the Nunes memo—these are all attempts to derail a legitimate and important investigation.

Now House conservatives are badgering DOJ officials for classified documents, hunting desperately for any scrap of information that would help them sully the investigation. By the way, for all of their ranting and raving and interfering, they don't have a scintilla of evidence to support that this is a witch hunt, that this is unfair, or that this is politically motivated.

The President and his allies don't quit with all these conspiracy theories, with all these ridiculous fomentations. Frankly, it is because they are afraid of what Mueller's investigation will reveal.

Every American who looks at the President's actions says that he is afraid of what the Mueller investigation will reveal. Yet the volume of mistruth, the weight of all the distortion and fabrication is hurting our democracy.

The double standard is enormous. The Times article shows no leaks when Trump was under investigation during the campaign; obviously, it was made public when Hillary Clinton was. Again, if this were a witch hunt, why didn't the FBI, which the President seems to feel is politically motivated with no scintilla of proof—why wouldn't they leak it?

One more point before I leave the floor—yesterday, the words of former Secretary Tillerson were these: “If our leaders seek to conceal the truth or we as a people become accepting of alternative realities that are no longer grounded in facts, then we as American citizens are on the pathway to relinquishing our freedom.”

He is exactly right. When distortion, lies, and intimidation come repeatedly from the other side and some conservative news media, and that becomes the accepted way, when it is just he said, she said, where one side is blatantly lying, and that becomes accepted, our democracy is at risk.

We are a beautiful thing here—founded on facts, real facts. What we have seen from the President and some of his allies, the way they are behaving, makes you worry about the future of this democracy.

Ultimately, I have a firm belief that they will not succeed. The Founding Fathers were geniuses—geniuses—when they set up a system of checks and balances that we read about in our classes and we study, but it is almost mystical. It always rises to the occasion. It will again, despite the efforts of the President, despite the efforts of some of his allies who have gone way overboard; I might mention Chairman NUNES on the other side. I believe the checks and balances of this country will hold, and we will eventually find out the truth, no matter where it leads.

Today is a good day to remember that the special counsel's investigation is serious, it is nonpartisan, and it is critical to the integrity of our democracy. We must allow it to proceed without political interference, without intimidation, to follow all the facts in

pursuit of the unvarnished truth on such an important issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2872

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2872) to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to reform the procedures provided under such Act for the initiation, investigation, and resolution of claims alleging that employing offices of the legislative branch have violated the rights and protections provided to their employees under such Act, including protections against sexual harassment and discrimination, and for other purposes.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Madam President, 100 days ago, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act, the bill that would fix the way we deal with sexual harassment and discrimination here in Congress.

The current system is broken. It makes no sense that a staffer who is sexually harassed or discriminated against has to possibly wait months for mediation, for counseling, or for a cooling off before she or he is able to even file a claim.

This bill would also make sure that when a Member of Congress has sexually harassed or discriminated against someone on their staff, the taxpayers are not left holding the bag. That is what the bill does. There is no reasonable excuse for anyone to stand in the way.

Our constituents do not deserve to have their hard-earned dollars paying for these settlements. What they deserve is a vote on this reform now. But what have we seen since the House acted? Nothing but politics as usual, despite having significant bipartisan support on this issue.

I thank my colleagues—Minority Leader CHUCK SCHUMER, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and Senator MURRAY—for their strong leadership on this issue and all of their efforts to pass this bill in the Senate. They have been great partners in trying to move this forward.

It is long since time that we should be acting on this issue. We need to pass this bill and send it to the President's desk so he can sign it into law, because what we have seen so clearly, after the several months and years that we have

been talking about this, is that sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace is far more pervasive and egregious than we previously might have recognized.

We have all witnessed harassment and discrimination. We all see what it actually does to society—whether it is happening in factories, in restaurants, in Hollywood, in the Halls of Congress, or right here in this building. But the difference is that while practically every other industry in the country seems to be taking this issue far more seriously and at least trying to make an effort to change their workplaces, Congress is dragging its feet.

Once again, a problem is staring us right in the face, and we are looking the other way. Enough is enough. We should do better. We have waited 100 days, and we should not have to wait any longer.

So I urge my colleagues to do the right thing now, to support this bill. Fix this system here in Congress that is failing our staffers on this issue of sexual harassment. This one is as easy as it gets. So let's have a vote and let's pass it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, I appreciate being recognized. I am going to talk about a budget proposal by my colleague from Kentucky, Senator PAUL.

To those who want to balance our budget and get us out of debt, count me in. How do we do that? I would like to do it without destroying the military. I would like not to open up the wound when it comes to the effects of sequestration.

Unfortunately, Senator PAUL's approach is devastating to the military. It creates unpredictability at a time when we need predictability. It throws us back into the old system where nobody knows what is going to happen.

Let me tell you about how you balance the budget and get us out of debt.

In 2008, this blue line represents discretionary spending. This is about 30 percent of overall Federal spending. You can see that from 2008 to 2028 it has been relatively flat. In the budget agreement we entered into just a few weeks ago, we are spending less on non-defense discretionary spending by \$2 billion than we did in 2010. This red line represents about the 65 to 70 percent of Federal spending called entitlements, and it is going through the roof. So if you want to balance the budget, you have to deal with the red line. You can't take it all out of the blue line.

Sequestration has taken about \$1 trillion out of the military. I compliment President Trump for entering into a budget agreement that will restore funding to the military at a time when we need it the most.

What did sequestration do to the military? According to Secretary Mattis, “no enemy in the field has done more to harm the combat readiness of

our military than sequestration.” What a stunning statement that is. In other words, Congress has sunk more ships, shot down more planes, and taken more soldiers off the battlefield than any enemy.

Under sequestration, we are at the smallest level for the Navy since 1915, the smallest Army since 1940, and the smallest Air Force in modern history. That is about to change with the budget agreement—\$700 billion for the military to retool, to buy new equipment, to have more people so that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines can spend a little bit of time with their families instead of being deployed all the time. So I applaud Senator PAUL’s zeal to balance the budget.

What I want to do is to expose what this budget actually does. If you are a defense hawk, you should be against this approach because it does the one thing we can’t afford to do. It creates unpredictability when it comes to our national defense strategy.

At times like this, I miss Senator MCCAIN because I know he would be here with me.

Under this proposal, we are going to cut \$404.8 billion next year. How much comes out of defense? Well, we will figure that out later. We know \$6 billion has to come out of it, but it effectively sets aside the budget agreement that plussed up defense. Over the next decade, \$13.358 trillion will be cut. Of that, how much comes out of defense? Well, we will figure that out later.

Let me tell you what that means to the military: devastation. Here is what Secretary Mattis said on April 26 about predictability: We need predictability so that we can actually put a strategy into effect. If you do not have a budget that reflects the strategy, it does not work.

Under the budget agreement, we have predictability for the next couple of years. We are restoring the cuts, and we have to build on what we have done in the next 2 years through the next 10 years.

What does this budget proposal do? It destroys predictability. It requires \$404.8 billion, and it doesn’t tell the Department of Defense how much they are going to have to pay. We know \$6 billion.

Here is what I would suggest. If the past is any indication of the future, our friends on the other side are not going to let us exempt defense. Sequestration was half out of defense, half out of non-defense, and left entitlements pretty much alone.

Senator PAUL says we are not going to deal with Social Security. Social Security is going broke. Somebody needs to deal with it. Ronald Reagan and Tip O’Neill dealt with it by adjusting the age of retirement to save Social Security benefits. So when you take Social Security off the table—and let’s say, magically, that everybody agreed with me that we should not undercut the defense budget, that we should actually add to it and give predictability—how

do you get \$13 trillion if you take Social Security and defense off the table? Well, we won’t because you can’t.

So to those who claim to be defense hawks—which I proudly claim to be—this is a symbolic vote. Yes, the symbolism here is that we don’t care about predictability when it comes to defense spending, that we are undercutting the agreement we achieved just a month ago to give the military the funds they need to defend this Nation.

Now, if you live in a world where the military is small and we don’t have any troops deployed anywhere, this might work. On September 10, 2001, we didn’t have one soldier in Afghanistan. We didn’t have an embassy, and not one dime in foreign aid went to Afghanistan. The next day, we got attacked, coming from Afghanistan, because radical Islam will not leave you alone just because you want to leave them alone.

President Trump is right to rebuild the military. He campaigned on setting aside sequestration. It was dumb. It hollowed out our force. It has been a nightmare for our military. Planes have been falling out of the sky.

What does this budget do? It puts us back into a level of unpredictability. It requires \$404 billion out of the 2019 budget. It says that \$6 billion has to come from defense. After that, we don’t know.

Here is what I know. It is going to undercut everything we have done to provide predictability. At the end of the day, this budget puts everything every defense person has been hoping for in jeopardy. It takes the efforts of President Trump to rebuild the military and throws it in a ditch, because if you take Social Security off the table, if you took defense off the table, then you can’t get there from here. Do you want to destroy the FBI, the CIA, the Department of Justice, the NIH?

This is a symbolic statement. These budgets usually don’t get many votes. I am tired of symbolism at the expense of our fighting men and women.

Here is my message. I will engage in entitlement reform. Senator PAUL had an entitlement reform bill for Medicare. I joined with him. As for Social Security, to my friends on the other side, let’s do something like Simpson-Bowles. Let’s go ahead and find a way to do entitlement reform and deal with the discretionary budget, not in a haphazard guessing kind of way.

Count me in for wanting to balance the budget, but you have to go where the money is. You have to do what Ronald Reagan and Tip O’Neill did. We have to do things for Medicare like the Gang of Six, Simpson-Bowles. What I will not symbolically lend my vote to is an approach to balance the budget that doesn’t give you a clue about how much money we are going to spend on the military for the next decade. That, by its very nature, undercuts all of the gains we have achieved to rebuild the military, to throw the military budget to the wolves.

I can tell you this: \$404.8 billion is coming out of the fiscal year 2019 budget. If you believe we can do that without affecting the military, then the last 7 or 8 years seems not to have meant anything, because for the last 6 or 7 years we have been cutting the military a lot because of a budget agreement that everybody thought would never happen. Nobody believed that sequestration would actually hit, that we would do \$1 trillion over a decade. The sequestration clause was a penalty clause to urge people to get it right by putting the Defense Department at risk, with 50 percent of sequestration cuts coming out of defense. The reason they put it on the table is because they thought Congress wouldn’t be dumb enough to actually get into sequestration. Guess what. We were that dumb. According to General Mattis, we have done more damage to the military than any enemy in the field since 9/11—what a title to claim as a Congress.

This budget throws us back into that situation on steroids. So, symbolically, I stand for balancing the budget, doing it in a responsible way that has entitlement reform as the heart of the effort in a bipartisan fashion.

Symbolically, I will not vote for a budget that does not give the Department of Defense the resources they need and the predictability they need to protect this country. That is what this budget does.

So to those of us on the Armed Services Committee, you should know better. You should know that of the \$13.5 trillion being cut over the next decade, a lot of it is going to come out of defense if it actually was a reality. If you take defense and Social Security off the table, it is a joke. Now is not the time to be funny. Now is the time to be serious. I am deadly serious about voting against any budget that doesn’t give the military the predictability they need to defend this Nation. This budget throws our military in a ditch, and I am tired of doing that.

I am going to vote no. I urge everyone who cares about Defense Department funding and predictability to vote no. Balance the budget, yes. Throw the military to the wolves, no.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND HARASSMENT REFORM BILL

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I am pleased to be here on the floor in support of my colleague Senator GILLIBRAND’s bill, the Congressional Accountability and Harassment Reform Act. I am pleased that so many Members of the Senate have supported the earlier version of the bill and are signing up to support this version as well.

It has been 100 days since the House acted on a significant and substantive reform of the process here in Congress on how we address sexual harassment. There have been plenty of stories about how unacceptable the current system is.

In spite of how far women's rights and equality have come in America, too many women continue to face inequality, discrimination, and harassment day in and day out. Our congressional workplace is not immune to that.

The world is changing, and the world is changing quickly, and movements like the "me too." campaign are finally giving women the voice they need to stand up and say no more.

Yet, in spite of this tide of change, the Senate refuses to act on our unacceptably obscure, complex, and difficult system for staff members to address sexual harassment and discrimination—a system that is difficult to navigate and void of transparency. It needs to change. It must change. One hundred days ago, the House said absolutely it must change, and we have seen no bill allowed to come to the floor to address it in the Senate.

The House did its duty. They put forward a vision of updating and strengthening procedures to protect women from sexual harassment and to address it, should it occur. Now it is time for the Senate to act, to hold ourselves to a much higher standard, to lead by example on Capitol Hill and for the rest of the Nation, to give those who work on our team who have been victimized by sexual harassment or discrimination a fair and transparent process to tell their stories, to pursue justice, to be free from the fear of professional or political retribution. That is exactly what the Congressional Accountability and Harassment Reform Act does. It requires sexual harassment awareness training. It simplifies a process for staffers to file complaints. It eliminates a mandatory, laborious process of required counseling and mediation. It protects a victim's option to publicly discuss their claims. It prohibits members found responsible for such behavior from using government funds—their office funds—to settle the claims, and it requires all settlements to be disclosed publicly unless the victim prefers otherwise. No longer would we be able to silence the victims or hide the misdeeds of the perpetrators from the American people.

I understand Members on the floor of the Senate may say: I want to hide from my actions; I want to pay off any settlement with my government funds, but being able to hide from your actions is unacceptable, and using government funds to pay off the situation is completely unacceptable.

Action is way past due. I am glad to join with my colleagues Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator WARREN, Senator HARRIS, and Senator MURRAY—so many who have come into this battle of equality, fairness, and fighting for those who have been victimized. That is what this act is about, and it is not acceptable that for 100 days the leadership of this body has sat on this bill, blocking it from being considered.

Let us recognize that we have a responsibility to our team members for

fairness, for transparency, and for accountability and to bring this bill to the floor immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I am here to express my strong opposition to President Trump's nomination of Gina Haspel to be the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. There are two reasons I oppose this nomination: Ms. Haspel's support for torture and her willingness to destroy evidence of the CIA's use of torture.

For years, apologists for the CIA's program have tried to redescribe this inhumane practice to make it seem less appalling to the American people. They have even renamed it. Torture has been rebranded as "enhanced interrogation."

There is no way to hide the basic facts. The techniques used by the CIA were torture: waterboarding so the person had the repeated sensation of drowning, confining people to small boxes for hours on end, depriving people of sleep for days, forcing people to hold painful stress positions.

The CIA did not invent these tactics. Listen to an American war hero describe what he endured as a prisoner of war in Vietnam.

I was being forced to stand up continuously—sometimes they'd make you stand up or sit on a stool for a long period of time. I'd stood up for a couple of days, with a respite only because one of the guards—the only real human being that I ever met over there—let me lie down for a couple of hours while he was on watch in the middle of one night.

Speaking about his captors, this former American POW said:

They bounced me from pillar to post, kicking and laughing and scratching. After a few hours of that, ropes were put on me and I sat that night bound with ropes.

They beat me around a little bit. I was in such bad shape that when they hit me it would knock me unconscious. They kept saying, "You will not receive any medical treatment until you talk."

I was getting about three or four spoonfuls of food twice a day. Sometimes I'd go for a day or so without eating.

I had learned what we all learned over there: Every man has his breaking point. I had reached mine. . . . I had been reduced to an animal during this period of beating and torture.

These are the words of Senator JOHN MCCAIN—our distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Arizona, a decorated Naval aviator who was beaten, broken, and tortured for 2 years after being captured in North Vietnam.

No matter how you dress it up, torture is torture, and it is wrong. It is inhumane, it is infective, and it is un-American.

That was the conclusion of the 2014 Senate Intelligence Committee report on the CIA's Detention and Interrogation Program during the Bush administration. The committee drew a definitive conclusion: Torture did not work. In fact, not only does torture not work, it makes it more difficult for other

agencies in our government to protect our national security.

Surely a person who is seeking to be the Director of the CIA in 2018 should agree with this assessment or be able to give a really good explanation of why not. Someone seeking to be the Director of the CIA should be able to state clearly that torture is wrong, but when repeatedly asked a yes-or-no question by my colleague Senator KAMALA HARRIS: Were the CIA's actions immoral, Ms. Haspel danced around the answer. These are not the answers of a person who can be trusted to administer the powerful CIA.

That question of trust goes to my second objection: The Director of the CIA will make many decisions that will be held in secret and never reviewed by the American people. It is critical we trust her judgment and that we have complete confidence in her honesty and willingness to submit to congressional oversight. I do not have that confidence in Ms. Haspel, and here is why. As we now know from the public reports, between October and December of 2002, Ms. Haspel oversaw a CIA prison in Thailand. Under her leadership, at least one detainee was waterboarded and subjected to other torture methods. As far as we know, Ms. Haspel raised no objections.

According to news reports, in 2005, Ms. Haspel recommended that the CIA destroy 92 videotapes of interrogations of detainees. CIA officials remember, at the time, Ms. Haspel was one of "the staunchest advocates inside the building for destroying the tapes"—"the staunchest advocates inside the building for destroying the tapes." She went so far as to draft the order for her boss, the Director of the National Clandestine Service, to sign, urging them to use "an industrial strength shredder," just to make sure they were completely destroyed.

Ms. Haspel destroyed these tapes despite Federal court orders requiring the preservation of the CIA's records, despite the objections of Members of Congress, and against the order of the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA Director, two White House Counsels, and senior Department of Justice officials. In a convenient coincidence for Ms. Haspel, the tapes she ordered destroyed reportedly documented the interrogation of detainees at the very same CIA prison in Thailand that Ms. Haspel previously supervised. Even more conveniently, some of the tapes reportedly documented the interrogation of the very detainee who was waterboarded under Ms. Haspel's leadership.

When Senator ANGUS KING asked about her destruction of the tapes, Ms. Haspel could come up with no credible explanation. How can we trust her to be fully forthright with Congress in the future if she cannot acknowledge missteps of the past?

Ms. Haspel had numerous opportunities to question the directives she was given during this era. According to the

Senate Intelligence Committee report, other CIA officers regularly called into question the effectiveness and safety of the techniques being used but not Gina Haspel. It was happening right before her eyes, and she did nothing to stop it. While her colleagues questioned the legitimacy of the CIA's program, according to public reports, Ms. Haspel vigorously defended it. According to those same reports, the Trump White House reviewed CIA message logs that "made it clear just how accepting she had been of since disavowed interrogation techniques."

The fact is, so far as the record indicates, the only action Ms. Haspel has taken with regard to U.S. torture practices has been to do her best to cover it up.

Why relitigate the choices that were made during those dark days after 9/11? Because this matters, especially with a President like Donald Trump. As a candidate, Donald Trump said he would "bring back a hell of a lot worse than waterboarding" because even "if it doesn't work, they deserve it anyway." As President, Donald Trump pulled back from his plan to reinstate the use of secret CIA prisons overseas only after overwhelming bipartisan outrage.

The stakes are high. The use of torture is one of the darkest chapters in our Nation's modern history. We cannot give this President any reason to drag this country back. We cannot allow any room for that mistake to occur again.

Gina Haspel has spent 33 years at the CIA. She has a decorated career and has sacrificed for this country in many ways Americans will never know. I have no doubt her current and former colleagues who praise her as a patriot are sincere, but patriotism and judgment are not the same thing. Someone who puts protecting the Agency above following the law cannot be trusted.

When announcing his opposition to Gina Haspel's nomination, Senator McCAIN recently said that "the methods we employ to keep our nation safe must be as right and just as the values we aspire to live up to and promote in the world." I agree with Senator McCAIN, and I urge my colleagues to reject her nomination.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. President, I rise to honor the lives of six Massachusetts police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. On April 12, our Commonwealth suffered a terrible loss when Sergeant Sean Gannon of the Yarmouth Police Department was killed while serving an arrest warrant. He was only 32 years old.

A native of New Bedford, MA, Sergeant Gannon graduated from Bishop Stang High School in North Dartmouth and then earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Westfield State University and a master's in emergency management from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

After college, Sergeant Gannon jumped headfirst into public service,

first serving as a public safety officer and later becoming a police officer with the Yarmouth Police Department, where he served for 8 years. Sergeant Gannon loved working with police dogs, and he was the first full-time K-9 narcotics officer at the Yarmouth PD. His loyal patrol dog, Near-Oh, was seriously injured in the incident that claimed Sergeant Gannon's life, but he is expected to recover and return to the Gannon family.

Sergeant Gannon had a huge heart and spent his free time volunteering with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, traveling, enjoying the outdoors, and working with his hands.

Thousands of mourners, including law enforcement officials from across the country, gathered to pay their respects at Sergeant Gannon's wake—a testament to the high esteem with which his community held him and to the power of his sacrifice.

Yarmouth police chief Frank Frederickson calls Sergeant Gannon the "Tom Brady of our department" and posthumously promoted him to the rank of sergeant.

Last month, I spoke with Sergeant Gannon's wife, Dara, and his parents, Patrick and Denise, to offer my condolences, my thoughts, and my prayers, and I continue to hold them in my heart.

Next year, Sergeant Gannon's name will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, recognizing law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities. We owe Sergeant Gannon and all of them a deep debt of gratitude. They died as heroes.

I would also like to recognize the five Massachusetts officers whose names were added to the memorial this year. Patrolman Seth A. Noyes, of the Boston Police Department, died on October 18, 1870, from injuries sustained in the line of duty. He was 41 years old. Sergeant John J. Shanahan, of the Revere Police Department, died on November 19, 1928, when he was hit by a truck while directing traffic around the scene of a car accident. He was 54 years old. Patrolman Jeremiah J. O'Connor, of the Lawrence Police Department, died on November 14, 1950, when he had a heart attack after pursuing a subject. He was 61 years old. Patrolman Frederick A. Bell, of the Newton Police Department, died on September 5, 1954, 4 months after he suffered severe injuries in a car crash. He was 39 years old. Sergeant Raymond P. Cimino, of the Chelsea Police Department, died on February 28, 1985, after suffering a heart attack. He was 44 years old.

We honor their service, we honor their sacrifice, and most importantly, we honor the lives they led and the legacies they leave behind.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, this morning we will be voting on a budget resolution written by my Republican

colleague Senator RAND PAUL from Kentucky.

This is a budget that would lead to devastating cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and education, while paving the way for even more tax breaks to the top 1 percent and large, profitable corporations.

Make no mistake about it: Senator PAUL's budget is an immoral budget. It is bad economic policy. While I am confident that this resolution will be defeated in the Senate, let me be very clear.

Senator PAUL's vision of America—balancing the budget on the backs of working families, the elderly, the sick, the children, and the poor in order to make the richest people in America even richer—is the exact same vision of the Republican Party in the House and the Republican Party in Washington, DC.

So let me commend Senator PAUL for being honest with the American people in terms of what he believes and for putting down on paper what a majority of Republicans in the House and billionaire campaign contributors like the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson believe.

And this is what they want.

At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, Senator PAUL and the Republicans in the House do not believe that it was good enough to provide over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations. The budget that we are debating today would give the wealthy and the powerful an even bigger tax break.

Last year, the congressional leadership came up with a bill to throw 32 million Americans off of health insurance. Senator PAUL and many Republicans in the House do not believe that bill went far enough. The budget we are debating today would throw up to 45 million Americans off of Medicaid.

A few months ago, President Trump proposed a budget calling for Medicare to be cut by nearly \$500 billion. Senator PAUL and a majority of Republicans do not believe those cuts went far enough. The budget we are debating today would cut Medicare by up to \$3.3 trillion over the next decade.

At a time when 10,000 people die each and every year waiting for their Social Security disability benefits to be processed, Donald Trump's budget proposed making a bad situation even worse by cutting the Social Security Disability Insurance Program.

Senator PAUL and a majority of Republicans do not believe that those cuts went far enough. The Paul budget would not only cut Social Security for the disabled, his budget would cut the entire Social Security program by \$442 billion over the next decade compared to current law.

Overall, Senator PAUL's resolution calls for slashing the budget by more than 51 percent by the end of the decade.

Not too long ago, if someone proposed ending Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid as we know it so

that billionaires could get a huge tax break, that would have been considered a radical and extreme agenda. Today it is the mainstream position of the Republican Party in Washington.

The reality is that Republicans in Washington have never believed in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Federal assistance in education, or providing any direct government assistance to those in need. They have always believed that tax breaks for the wealthy and the powerful would somehow miraculously trickle down to every American, despite all history and evidence to the contrary.

Needless to say, and I am only speaking for myself, I have a very different vision of America.

In my view, we need to create a government and an economy that works for all of us, not just a handful of billionaires.

What does that mean?

It means that instead of giving over a trillion dollars in tax breaks to the top 1 percent and large profitable corporations, we must demand that Wall Street, the billionaire class and large, profitable corporations start paying their fair share in taxes.

Instead of trying to abolish the estate tax, which impacts less than two-tenths of 1 percent, we must substantially increase the inheritance tax not only to bring in needed revenue, but to dismantle the oligarchs that now control so much of our economic and political lives.

Instead of making it easier for corporations to avoid paying U.S. taxes by stashing their cash in the Cayman Islands, we need to crack down on offshore tax haven abuse and use this revenue to create 15 million good-paying American jobs rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure.

Instead of cutting Social Security, we need to expand Social Security so that every American can retire with the dignity and the respect they deserve. We pay for that by making sure everyone who makes over \$250,000 a year pays the same percentage of their income into Social Security as the middle class.

Instead of cutting Medicare, we need to guarantee healthcare as a right to every man, woman, and child in America through a Medicare for all, single-payer healthcare program.

Instead of slashing Federal aid to education, we must make every public college and university in America tuition free, and we pay for that by imposing a tax on Wall Street speculation. If we could bail out Wall Street 10 years ago, we can tax Wall Street so that every American who has the desire and the ability can get a higher education regardless of their income.

Instead of listening to the Koch brothers, Sheldon Adelson, and other multibillionaire campaign contributors, it is time to start listening to the overwhelming majority of Americans who want a government and an economy that works for the many, not just the few.

Let us not only defeat the Paul resolution, but let us have the guts to take on the greed of Wall Street, the greed of the pharmaceutical and healthcare industry, the greed of Big Oil, and the greed of corporate America and break up the oligarchy that is destroying the social fabric of our society.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, shortly, we will be voting on the penny plan budget. This is a budget that cuts one penny out of every dollar.

As we have gone through time and again, we have seen that there is so much waste in government, from \$700,000 spent studying Neil Armstrong's statement on the Moon—did he say "one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind," or did he say "one small step for a man"? We spent \$700,000 trying to discover whether Neil Armstrong said "a man" or just "man." It is a complete boondoggle, a complete waste of money. But does it get better? No, because we keep giving people more money.

Some have come to the floor and said: Well, this is just an end-around attempt to cut military spending. We can't cut any military spending.

That is simply not true. The penny plan budget says nothing about cutting military spending. The penny plan budget says this: We cut 1 percent of the budgetary spending. Where it is cut in the budget is left up to the appropriations committees. It could be cut equally, or it could be cut more in some areas and less in other areas. We could cut some from military; we could cut zero from military. It is left up to the appropriators.

Some would argue: Well, it doesn't define where it would come from.

Well, that is the job of the appropriators and the job of the Senate to vote up or down on it.

To those who argue that unlimited spending for the military is good for our national security, they might want to think about whether there is a possible problem in that China has \$1 trillion worth of our debt.

Let's say for some reason there was a conflict in the South China Sea and we were somehow involved militarily there. What if China were to say: We are going to dump your dollars. We are going to dump your Treasury bills.

Could they wreak havoc, dumping \$1 trillion? Yes. Would it hurt their assets? Yes, but it could be used as a weapon against the United States.

Our insecurity is our enormous debt—\$21 trillion.

In some ways, the budget vote is symbolism, but the question is whether that symbolism will be who we are as a Republican Party or whether that symbolism will be that we are simply the same as the Democrats, that we simply don't care about the debt, we don't care that interest on the debt is the second biggest item.

After the Defense Department—about \$700 billion—the next biggest item is

\$300 billion in interest. What happens when interest rates rise? The Federal Reserve has artificially kept interest rates low. What about when interest rates go to 5 percent? Could that happen? Yes. Could it be precipitated by a foreign nation no longer buying our debt? Yes.

If interest rates were to go to 5 percent currently, I don't know that we would be able to manage our debt. That would probably be a doubling of our interest payment, or more—\$600 billion. If we do nothing and the Federal Reserve is able to keep our interest rates in the 2 percent range, interest rates will still be about the same as the Department of Defense within 10 years. The Department of Defense is about \$700 billion, and it will grow probably to \$800-and-some-odd billion, but interest rates will be \$761 billion within a decade. If that is not a threat to our national security, I don't know what is.

Really what we have is a threat to our honor as public servants who make promises to voters. We came to power in Washington because we said President Obama spent too much and borrowed too much. We said it over and over and over again until voters chose us. But what if, when we come into power, we forget who we are? When Republicans are in the minority, they are the conservative party. The problem is that when the Republicans become the majority, there is no conservative party.

What I am arguing for today is to cut one penny out of every dollar. There is waste from top to bottom in every department of government, including the military.

Defense Logistics—they build stuff. They have \$800 million they say is missing.

Defense spending or military spending in Afghanistan—\$700 million of ammunition missing. Do we think that might be a little bit worrisome given all the different characters in the Afghan civil war? There is \$700 million in ammunition that cannot be accounted for and \$28 million in uniforms that cannot be accounted for.

They built a \$45 million gas station in Afghanistan, but it is for natural gas. The first problem is that they don't have cars in Afghanistan. The second problem is that none of them run on natural gas. So how did we fix that problem? We bought them cars. We bought them cars that run on natural gas, and they still couldn't afford the gas, so we gave them credit cards. How moronic are we as a people to keep flushing money down a rat hole in Afghanistan—nearly \$50 billion.

What I am asking is that we cut 1 percent—1 penny out of every dollar.

Could we save some in the military? Absolutely. Is this done to punish the military? No. It is to make us stronger as a country. Could the military suffer a 1-percent cut and actually become more efficient? Absolutely. It is not a question of whether our military budget is too big or too small; it is a question of whether our military mission is

too large. We are at war in half a dozen countries or more. We have 6,000 troops in Africa, and I would suspect that there is not one person in 1,000 in America who knows whom we are fighting or why we are fighting in Africa.

But that is not really what this is about. It is about spending in every department of government. It is about whether one penny out of every dollar is being wasted.

People say: I am against the waste. I am against all the waste. I am against the study on Japanese quail to see if they are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. I am against the Neal Armstrong study on whether he said one man on the Moon or just man on the Moon.

The thing is, we can't get rid of waste unless we actually reduce top-line spending because nobody has any incentive to do it.

When the sequester first came into place, even though people didn't like it, people throughout government began finding savings. You cannot get rid of waste in government if you keep giving people more money.

The National Science Foundation has wasted millions and millions of dollars over a 30-year history. William Proxmire first reported in the early 1970s, and he said that one of the first studies was \$50,000—back then, that was more money than it is now—to study why men like women. Really? That is a good use of taxpayer funds?

This year, we will spend \$1 trillion we don't have. There will be nearly a \$1 trillion deficit this year. That is what we complained about under President Obama, was big, annual \$1 trillion deficits. Are we going to be the party that is actually true to what we say we are for, that we are fiscally conservative? Can we not cut one penny out of every dollar?

So I implore my colleagues to think long and hard about this vote. Think about how the people at home would want you to vote. You have gone home and said you were for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. The balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, which virtually all of my Republican colleagues voted for, says we will balance the budget in 5 years. Well, we are either honest and serious or we are not. So if you can vote for a balanced budget amendment that balances the budget, why would you not vote for a budget that balances in 5 years?

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. PAUL. I will finish in a few minutes.

It is a canard to say that the cut is coming from the military. The cut is a 1-percent cut. It is \$3.2 trillion spent, and it is \$32 billion that would be cut. Every year, we send \$30 billion to foreign countries that hate us. We spend nearly \$50 billion in Afghanistan every year. If we were simply looking at the

Department of Commerce—\$14 billion—and the Department of Education—\$70 billion—I think we could find \$30 billion that we would never know was gone.

The bottom line is whether the debt is threatening our national security, whether it is threatening the security of the economic foundation of our country, and I think without question it is.

This vote is a litmus test for conservatives. Are you a conservative? Do you think we could cut one penny out of every dollar? I think it is a conservative notion that we have long said we are for. Now it is time to step up to the plate and actually vote what you say you stand for.

With that, I yield back my time and ask for the yeas and nays.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for a moment for a unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There does not appear to be a sufficient second at this time.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask to propound a unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask that I be recognized for 1 minute. No, I don't. I ask that I be recognized at the conclusion of this vote to explain why the Paul amendment would be damaging to our national security. That is my unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient question.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, would it be appropriate at this time for me to ask for 1 minute prior to the vote?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, the Senator from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 minute.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you very much.

I know the intentions are good; we have voted on the same thing for the last 5 years. I can tell you right now what the vote result is going to be because it has been the same for the last 5 years.

No one has had a more consistently conservative record than I have, but I would have to say that this would undo a lot of what we have accomplished with the last vote to allow us to start rebuilding our systems. We got in a position where we didn't have brigade combat teams that were adequately prepared to go to battle. Sixty percent of our F-18s were not flying. We are trying to recover from all of these things. We have now started that recovery.

My concern is—and I think Senator GRAHAM said it very well—in the event that we pass this—if it did pass; it won't, but if it did—that is going to be a problem and a problem that we can't overcome.

Right now, our No. 1 concern should be defending this Nation. This is the opportunity to at least let people know that there is a legitimate vote for conservatives to vote for a strong national defense.

I don't want to send a signal to our kids overseas—our kids in battles and in harm's way—that we are not going to take care of their needs, as we just started just a year ago to do. We have to continue that.

For the sake of our national security, I suggest that we vote against the Paul proposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 36.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), and the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 21, nays 76, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—21

Barrasso	Fischer	Moran
Cornyn	Flake	Paul
Crapo	Grassley	Risch
Cruz	Johnson	Rubio
Daines	Kennedy	Sasse
Enzi	Lankford	Scott
Ernst	Lee	Toomey

NAYS—76

Alexander	Hassan	Peters
Baldwin	Hatch	Portman
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Roberts
Blunt	Heller	Rounds
Boozman	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Hoeven	Schatz
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cantwell	Inhofe	Shaheen
Capito	Isakson	Shelby
Cardin	Jones	Smith
Carper	Kaine	Stabenow
Casey	King	Sullivan
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Manchin	Tillis
Corker	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	McCaskey	Van Hollen
Cotton	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wicker
Gardner	Murphy	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murray	Young
Graham	Nelson	
Harris	Perdue	

NOT VOTING—3

Booker	Duckworth	McCain
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The motion was rejected.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. WARNER. The Senator will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I thank the Senator, and I appreciate that very much.

I just want to make a brief statement about the vote that just took place. I tried to communicate this, and there wasn't time before the vote. Right now, we have more threats than we have ever had in the history of this country. I think we all realize that.

General Dunford said that we are losing our qualitative and quantitative advantage over our adversaries. He was talking about Russia and China, in this case. We have adversaries out there that are actually ahead of us in terms of their capabilities in artillery and other areas.

Here we are, and, quite frankly, we knew how this vote was going to come out. I have a list of the same vote that has taken place for the last 5 years, and it came out the same way it did before. The point here is that even though it wasn't going to pass, the problem is, it is sending a message to our kids who are out there in harm's way.

We look and we see that we have started our road to recovery, and it has been an exciting thing because we came so close to being in a position where one-third of our brigade combat teams didn't work. The F-35s in the field—the Marines could use less than half of them. All of these things were going on because of what has happened to our military.

Finally, we turned the corner. We turned the corner on the last vote—not the one we took today but the one we took a few months ago—and we now are rebuilding our military.

I had breakfast this morning with the Secretary of the Army and with the Chief of the Army, and really good things are happening. I can't think of anything worse than to send a message to our kids in the field that we are going to go back and undo the positive things that have pulled us up into a competitive position.

For the sake of our military, for the sake of defending America, the vote there was to vote against sending the wrong message to our kids in harm's way.

I thank Senator WARNER for yielding.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume executive session and consideration of the Haspel nomination.

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

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I thank our friend, the chairman of the committee, the Senator from North Carolina.

We have gone through a lot over the last couple of years, and I appreciate the fact that in terms of timing, he is going to allow me to speak first on Gina Haspel.

Gina Haspel is among the most qualified people to be nominated for the position of the Director of the CIA. She has served with the Agency for 33 years, including tours as a Case Officer, four times as a Station Chief, the Deputy Chief of National Resources Division, the Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service, and currently as the Deputy Director of the Agency. In many ways, her story is representative of the thousands of people at the Agency and throughout the intelligence community who serve quietly, without recognition, and often at great personal risk in order to keep our Nation safe from those who wish to do us harm.

In addition, while she has not emphasized this, we should not overlook the historic nature of Ms. Haspel's nomination as the first woman to be nominated as Director of the CIA. Seeing her portrait in the halls of the Agency next to the long line of former Directors will be a long overdue but important breakthrough for the intelligence community.

I would also note that as a Senator from Virginia, the home to thousands of CIA personnel and the vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I have heard from many Agency officers—and for that matter, members of the rank and file of other intelligence community agencies—and almost to a person, the rank and file have supported her nomination.

Let me be clear. This has not been an easy decision for me. Over the past several weeks, I have held multiple meetings and calls with Ms. Haspel and many others about her record and her character. In our open hearing, I raised questions about her involvement with the rendition, detention, and interrogation program and, if she were to be confirmed, her willingness to push back if President Trump asked her to undertake any immoral or legally questionable activity. I questioned her willingness to declassify, to the extent possible, more information about her background at the Agency. I still wish more could be done to discuss her background in an open setting. The Agency just recently has declassified more information about her service with the counterterrorism center. I thank them for that but still believe it would have been preferable if we could have found a way to be even more transparent. If she is confirmed as Director, I would encourage Ms. Haspel to keep this in mind.

To those here who have concluded that Ms. Haspel's background with the RDI program should preclude her from leading the CIA, well, I respect their arguments, and I know the passion with which they put forward their position. I myself struggled with this point.

Many people at the CIA participated in the program. They were told it was legal by the Justice Department and ordered by the President, but some of the actions undertaken were repugnant and amounted to torture. Since those days, America has had a long debate about the standards that we, as a nation, can and should apply to the treatment of detainees regardless of who they might be. That is why I was one of the 17 cosponsors in the Senate of the McCain-Feinstein amendment to prohibit torture and to prohibit any interrogation techniques not authorized by the U.S. Army Field Manual. That is why I voted to both approve and to declassify the Senate Intelligence Committee's extensive study of the RDI program.

I strongly believe that we, as Americans, have a duty to look squarely at our mistakes and not to sweep them under the rug but to learn from them and, in the future, to do better. Nor do I believe that we can excuse torture or the way in which detainees—no matter who they were or what crimes they were guilty of—were treated. We are better than that, and we need a CIA Director who will ensure in an ironclad way that we will never return to those days, that we will follow the law as enacted by Congress.

This is why I pushed Ms. Haspel, both in our hearings and in our private meetings, on this very point: What is her view now of the RDI program? And how will she react if she were asked, as Director, to undertake something similar in the future? In both our one-on-one meetings and in classified sessions before the committee, I found Acting Director Haspel to be forthcoming regarding her views on that program. However, I thought it was important that she say this in public, not just privately, which is why I asked her to memorialize those comments in writing.

Gina Haspel wrote: "With the benefit of hindsight and my experience as a senior Agency leader, the enhanced interrogation program is not one the CIA should have undertaken."

I believe this is a clear statement of growth as a leader and learning from mistakes of the past. While I also wish that she would have been more forceful, I also understand her reluctance to condemn the many men and women at the Agency who thought they were doing the right thing at that time.

I first met Gina at one of her overseas postings, but I didn't really get to work with her until this last year, when the former Director appointed her to be Deputy Director of the Agency. Over the last year, I have found her to be professional and forthright with our Intelligence Committee.

I have had the ability to have candid, unfiltered discussions with her. Whether the challenge we confront is North Korea, ISIS terrorists, or the long-term challenges of countries like China and Russia, I will feel safer knowing that the CIA has Ms. Haspel at the helm.

Most importantly, I believe she is someone who can and will stand up to