

concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 695 shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 29 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Fischer	Murkowski
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Blunt	Gardner	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Portman
Burr	Grassley	Risch
Capito	Hatch	Roberts
Cassidy	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cochran	Heller	Rubio
Collins	Hoeven	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cortez Masto	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Crapo	Lankford	Tillis
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Manchin	Wicker
Donnelly	McCaskill	Young
Enzi	McConnell	
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Jones	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Paul	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—1

McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 44.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

HONORING HOMETOWN HEROES
ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany H.R. 1892.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 1892, a bill to amend title 4, United States Code, to provide for the flying of the flag at half-staff in the event of the death of a first responder in the line of duty.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the

Senate to the bill, with amendment No. 1930, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 1931 (to amendment No. 1930), to change the enactment date.

McConnell motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, McConnell amendment No. 1932, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 1933 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 1932), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell amendment No. 1934 (to amendment No. 1933), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, is it proper to speak as in morning business?

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in strong support of the bipartisan Budget Act which will hopefully pass later today.

This bill, as the name implies, is the result of rigorous, bipartisan, and bicameral negotiations. I am pleased to have played a part in this endeavor, and I am gratified to note that in addition to keeping the government open and providing much needed resources for our troops, the bill before us addresses a number of longstanding priorities of the Senate Finance Committee, including many that I have personally been working toward for years now. Indeed, this legislation, once passed and signed into law, will be the combination of years of work put in by members of the Finance Committee on both sides of the aisle.

I want to take some time to say a few words about some of the bipartisan victories that will be achieved through this legislation. I should warn my colleagues that this will take a few minutes because there are quite a few provisions to discuss.

For starters, let's talk about healthcare. Among the more prominent victories in this bill is an extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program for an additional 4 years. As we all know, last month Congress passed a historic 6-year CHIP extension, which was eventually signed into law. The bill before us would add another 4 years on top of that 6-year provision, providing a total extension of 10 years—10 years. That is remarkable. I have a long history with the CHIP program. I was the original author of the program, and I have always been an outspoken champion of it.

We have had some back-and-forth here in the Senate about CHIP in recent months, and some of it has gotten pretty fierce. However, today the Senate will pass legislation—bipartisan legislation—to provide unprecedented security and certainty for the families who depend on CHIP and the State governments that need more predictability to map out their own expenditures.

I am sure my friend, former Senator Kennedy, is up there watching. I am very happy he came on this bill in the early stages and helped to put it through.

In addition to the CHIP extension, the budget bill includes a bipartisan Finance Committee bill entitled the "Creating High-Quality Results and Outcomes Necessary to Improve Chronic Care Act of 2017"—a fairly long title. Senator WYDEN, the Finance Committee's ranking member, and I have been working for years on this legislation, which, once enacted, will improve health outcomes for Medicare beneficiaries living with chronic conditions. It will also help bring down Medicare costs and streamline care coordination services.

We have been working with our colleagues, stakeholders, and advocates for quite some time. We moved the bill through the committee last year, and the Senate actually passed it once already without a single vote in opposition. This legislation will finally get the CHRONIC Care Act to the President's desk.

I thank Senator WYDEN for the time and effort he has put into this action. I also thank our other colleagues on the Finance Committee, particularly Senators ISAKSON and WARNER, who joined us on a working group to develop this important legislation and move it forward. This bill, as promised, will relieve a great deal of suffering for Medicare beneficiaries and will do so in a fiscally responsible manner.

The budget bill also contains a package of bipartisan provisions that have come to be known as Medicare and health extenders. These provisions are high priorities for a number of our Members throughout the Senate, and I am very pleased we were able to include them in the final package of the spending bill.

While these are all important, I would like to highlight that there are a few provisions we were able to permanently resolve and not just extend. One such provision will repeal a flawed limit on the amount Medicare would pay for outpatient physical and other therapy that threatened access for some of the most vulnerable patients. I worked with other Members in both Chambers to find a lasting solution to this decades-old problem, again demonstrating that Congress can tackle hard problems and not just kick the can down the road.

In addition to the Medicare extenders, the bipartisan funding bill also includes some key reforms to the underlying Medicare Programs. These include expanding access to in-home treatments for patients with Medicare Part B and improved means-testing for the premiums paid by high-income earners under Medicare Parts B and D, all of which will help improve the overall fiscal outlook for Medicare.

Furthermore, the bill repeals the Independent Payment Advisory Board that was created under the so-called Affordable Care Act. This, too, is a step that has garnered bipartisan support, as it should, showing that many Democrats have joined Republicans in recognizing just how ill-advised the creation of this panel really was.

The bill addresses a number of other healthcare priorities as well, including continued funding for various public health programs, some delays for burdensome Medicaid reductions that have been on the horizon, and it provides relief to Puerto Rico's healthcare challenges faced after the hurricane devastation by increasing Medicaid funding.

I would also like to say, in any big package, there are a lot of policies in here that give me concern. Some of the offsets, particularly related to Medicare Part D that my Democratic colleagues insisted be in this package, are very troubling to me, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to address this moving forward.

In addition to these healthcare priorities, the funding bill extends a number of important tax provisions in order to help families, individuals, and small businesses throughout the country. We made progress on producing and passing tax extenders legislation with the passage of the PATH Act in 2015. Still, many more important items remain to be handled, and we have worked to address Member priorities to extend certain provisions. The provisions included in the spending bill all expire at the end of 2016. This legislation will extend them through this year.

Finally, the bill takes some major steps forward in the area of human services, which is also under the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee.

In addition to continuing funding for important child and family services programs, the bill includes the Family First Prevention Services Act, another bill originally introduced by Senator WYDEN and myself to strengthen families and reduce inappropriate foster care placements. This legislation will help keep more children safely with their families instead of placing them in foster care. Under this bill, States will be able to fund effective services that have been shown to prevent children from entering foster care. It will also encourage States to place children with foster families instead of in group homes, and it will reduce the bureaucracy faced by relatives who seek to take in children rather than have them end up in foster care.

Also included in the spending bill is the Social Impact Partnership Act, a bill I introduced along with Senator BENNET, which will support innovative public-private partnerships to address critical social and public health challenges. As a result of this bill, States will identify key social challenges they want to address, state the results they hope to achieve, and the Federal Government will pay for a rigorous, independent evaluation to verify that they achieved the outcome.

As you can see, we have been very busy in the Finance Committee for the past few years. Obviously, we have seen success in some of the more high-profile items, like tax reform late last year, as well as long-term highway funding and renewing trade promotion authority in 2015, but our work has

gone far beyond these efforts. Thankfully, with passage of this spending bill, many more of the committee's efforts—virtually all of them bipartisan—will come to fruition.

I thank the Senate leaders from both parties who have worked with us to include all of these important provisions. I thank my colleagues on the Finance Committee—both Republicans and Democrats—who have put in so much time over the years on all of these efforts and congratulate them all for the success we look forward to seeing this week.

Of course, we do still have to pass the bill. Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to vote in favor of this bipartisan legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, before I make my remarks, let me just say that in what we might call the current unpleasantness in Washington, what a pleasant thing it is to be here on the Senate floor and hear the respected chairman of the Senate Finance Committee say the positive words he has said, describe his success at expanding CHIP and call to our memory the name of Senator Kennedy—who was his friend and ally in creating that program upon which so many children across America depend.

So I thank him for a lovely moment in an otherwise somewhat, shall we say, challenging Washington environment.

Mr. President, in the spirit of back-and-forth—which is often the spirit of the Senate—I am following Senator HATCH, but I see Senator WICKER also on the floor. If time is pressing on him, I would be willing to consider yielding for a few moments. I don't know how much time he intends to consume.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, the Senator is very kind, and time is not that pressing. I am actually expecting two or three colleagues, and perhaps we will engage in a colloquy after that. I do appreciate my friend's courtesy.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, in that event, let me commence my 196th "Time to Wake Up" climate speech.

The last year has been a lousy one for environmental policy in the United States. While the rest of the world began implementing the Paris Agreement to reduce the carbon emissions that are changing our climate and our oceans, this proud body, the U.S. Senate, sat on its hands.

When President Trump handed the keys to his administration over to what I call the three stooges of the fossil fuel industry—Pruitt, Perry, and Zinke—the Senate sat on its hands. The recent interview with British journalist Piers Morgan shows Trump willing to make a scientific fool of himself on the question of climate change to please the general managers pulling the strings of his administration, the Koch brothers.

This record puts them all way out of line—way out of line—with most Americans. Overwhelming numbers of younger Americans demand climate action and plan to hold politicians who stand in its way accountable. Faith groups, universities, State and local governments, and businesses have stepped up their climate leadership. Businesses hear from their customers and know the American people want action, but if corporate America is serious about climate action in Washington, corporate America needs to explain why the Big Business lobby groups in this town—the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Petroleum Institute, and the National Association of Manufacturers—stand so resolutely in the way of climate action. These three industry groups have been instrumental in blocking climate action, using lobbying, dark money election spending, and threats of dark money election spending.

Today, I want to take a look at the biggest and swampiest of the three, the so-called U.S. Chamber of Commerce. First, let's clear up some common misperceptions about the chamber. It is not a government agency, and it bears almost no relation to your hometown chamber of commerce.

Instead of representing the interests of small businesses, the chamber represents the interests of giant corporations, international corporations, and the ultrarich. The chamber president, Tom Donohue, admitted as much in a letter to the tobacco company Philip Morris. He wrote that small businesses "provide the foot soldiers, and often the political cover, for issues big companies want pursued."

Why this service to giant corporations and the ultrarich? Easy answer: They pay the bills. The vast majority of the chamber's \$275-million-per-year budget comes from just a handful of donors. For instance, in 2014, just 119 donations accounted for over \$160 million of the chamber's fundraising haul. Who are these donors? Well, the chamber doesn't want you to know. It does all it can to resist transparency, but thanks to voluntary disclosures by some corporations and the tax filings of some nonprofit groups, we know that its donors include many of America's biggest corporations as well as political front groups run by the billionaire Koch brothers and Karl Rove.

The chamber took in at least \$5.5 million from Koch-backed groups between 2012 and 2014, and a Karl Rove-affiliated group gave the chamber \$5.25 million in 2014 alone. It would be interesting to know how much of the Karl Rove money is actually Koch money laundered through the Karl Rove front group.

What does the chamber do with all of this money? It lobbies, it litigates, and it runs political attack ads on television, radio, and the internet.

Let's start with the lobbying.

The chamber spends far more than anyone else in lobbying the Federal

Government. It spent more than \$80 million last year alone—far more than any individual company. Over the last 20 years, the chamber has spent more than \$1.4 billion—that is billion with a “b” and the nine zeros after it—in lobbying the Federal Government. That is three times more than the next largest lobbying spender—a swamp monster, indeed.

Much of this lobbying is against environmental policies, with the chamber’s lobbying Congress, the White House, the EPA, the Department of Energy, and the Department of the Interior on behalf of—yes, you guessed it—the fossil fuel companies. The chamber champions the fossil fuel agenda. It opposes limits on carbon emissions and supports drilling and mining on public lands and in offshore waters.

The chamber champions only the fossil fuel energy agenda and attacks renewable energy despite that industry’s being responsible for more jobs than the fossil fuel industry. In 2016, for instance, the chamber lobbied the Federal Government on at least 14 separate issues in favor of the oil and gas industry and on at least 7 issues in favor of the coal industry. On renewable energy, there were zero—not one.

It was the chamber that paid for the debunked study that claimed the Paris Agreement would kill jobs and weaken economic growth, which Trump cited as justification for withdrawing from that agreement.

The chamber also spends a lot of effort in importuning the courts. In a recent 3-year period, the chamber was involved in roughly 500 cases as either a plaintiff or an amicus curiae—an interested party deemed a “friend of the court.”

Once again, the chamber fronted for the fossil fuel industry. In just 3 years, it sued the EPA 15 times and filed amicus briefs against the EPA in another 11 cases, making the EPA the chamber’s most frequent target in court. The chamber sued against the Clean Power Plan and has consistently opposed the EPA’s authority to regulate carbon emissions under the Clean Air Act.

The chamber also wrote an amicus brief that urged the Supreme Court to strike down limits on election spending. It got its wish in the Citizens United decision. Citizens United allowed dark money groups—outside groups—to spend unlimited sums in corrupting our elections. The chamber and the fossil fuel industry have been the biggest beneficiaries—the biggest users—of this horrible decision.

Over the last 10 years, the chamber has spent more than \$150 million in dark money on Federal elections, and we don’t know how much it has spent on State elections other than we know it has contributed millions to other outside spending groups that are active at the State level.

In 2016, the chamber was the largest dark money spender in congressional races. It often ran vicious attack ads in

elections across the country. Many of these ads supported the fossil fuel agenda. Here is one from the 2016 Senate race in Pennsylvania. The chamber was again the largest dark money spender on this race in its having spent over \$6 million. It ran a series of attack ads against Katie McGinty and slammed her for supporting legislation to reduce carbon emissions.

Here is the ad:

A couple of moms are watching their kids, and the kids are playing on the playground. One is complaining that McGinty supports taxing energy from fossil fuels, and the other mom remarks as to how much energy their kids have, to which the first replies: Oh, if McGinty finds out about that, she will tax the kids. Right on cue, an actor who is supposed to represent McGinty, the candidate, arrives—of course in a chauffeured black sedan—ready to tax the energetic kids. The ad ends with one mother screaming at her son, Jimmy, to run away.

So that is what we get—the chamber as the enforcer for the fossil fuel industry. Dare to support climate action or oppose fossil fuel interests, and the chamber will go after you with everything it has.

It is actually worse than that because there is one thing more insidious than spending millions of dollars on attack ads, and that is the threat of spending millions of dollars on attack ads. You see, once Citizens United allowed the chamber and other outside election spending groups to spend unlimited funds, the corollary was that it could threaten to spend those unlimited funds. All the chamber and other outside election spending groups now have to do is threaten to fund a challenger in order to bring many candidates and elected officials to heel. This Citizens United-sanctioned intimidation explains why we cannot make good climate policy in Washington, and the chamber is its leading proponent.

Several big American companies have stopped funding the chamber over its anti-climate agenda. Apple, PG&E, Costco, Hewlett-Packard, Starbucks, Mars, and others have all left. Yet plenty of other corporate climate champions still fund the chamber. It is unbelievable but true.

Here is an ad that was run last spring by several big companies that urged Trump to stay in the Paris Agreement. These companies—Facebook, Gap Inc., Google, Intel Corporation, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, and Salesforce—signed this full-page ad that supported the Paris Agreement. At the same time, they were donors to the chamber, which was out attacking the Paris Agreement. How do you publicly support the Paris Agreement while funding the swamp monster that attacks the Paris Agreement?

The Trump administration is also seeking to cut funding for renewable energy research by 72 percent. America’s business leaders should want to

maintain U.S. technological leadership and create millions of high-paying, clean energy jobs in the future, but the chamber’s so-called Global Energy Institute’s website is promoting Keystone XL, the Dakota Access Pipeline, and offshore drilling. I kid you not—offshore drilling. Facebook, Gap Inc., Google, Intel, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, and Salesforce—offshore drilling? What do you bet those companies won’t take out full-page ads to support offshore drilling? They do come to Washington to lobby, but when Facebook, Google, Intel, Microsoft, and Salesforce came to lobby Congress through their trade association TechNet, they didn’t even mention climate change. They didn’t even make clean energy a priority. Instead, they fund the biggest, baddest opponent of climate action and clean energy.

Why do companies that are so committed to increasing their own use of renewable energy not lobby Congress in favor of renewable energy? It is a battle here, folks. Where is the corporate cavalry?

As long as pro-climate companies do nothing in Congress and allow fossil fuel front groups like the chamber to be their voices here in Washington, how do they expect to make progress? The Chamber of Commerce they fund throws around hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and elections to ensure that Congress will not take the climate action they seek. What are Facebook, Gap, Google, Intel, Microsoft, Morgan Stanley, and Salesforce waiting for? Do they expect some kind of immaculate political conception of a climate bill—climate action that suddenly floats magically down from the clouds? It is not like they don’t lobby themselves. For Pete’s sake, they know how the game is played. They just don’t lobby for this. They just don’t lobby for climate action.

Look, good corporate policies on climate are important. They are very important. I get that, and I appreciate that. But we know well that good corporate policies will not reach those Paris climate goals. To reach those goals, you have to pass a bill. You have to do something on climate here in Congress. When the fossil fuel industry’s blockade stopping such a bill is right here in Congress, this is a battlefield you have to show up on. It is great to take out ads—it helps—but it would really help to be present here in Congress and accounted for.

Fighting for climate action in Washington is indispensable in order to finally break the stranglehold of the chamber and its dark money allies. So please, corporate America, show up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my colleagues Senator CASEY and Senator WICKER.

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

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise with my colleagues Senator WICKER from Mississippi and Senator CASEY from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to talk about legislation that I believe is of vital importance to every State in the country—certainly to mine, the great State of Alaska. Most importantly, it is vitally important legislation to the men and women who serve in the U.S. Coast Guard. I am going to talk about them for a minute. Yet, in addition to the legislation we are talking about here, it is also vitally important to our maritime and fishing communities.

This is very important legislation. Which legislation am I talking about? S. 1129, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017. It is legislation that has broad bipartisan support, including from Chairman THUNE of South Dakota and Ranking Member NELSON of Florida of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; my colleague from Alaska, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI; and many, many others, Republicans and Democrats. The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Coast Guard and our fishing fleets and our fisheries, marked up this important legislation back in May of 2017. Unfortunately, due to a lack of an agreement on one particular provision—although we have very strong support, even for this particular provision, of over 60 Senators—the Coast Guard bill overall remains stuck.

We always talk about the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines. I love them to death, but sometimes we forget about our fifth branch of service. These men and women do incredible work every single day for our country.

This bipartisan bill, the Coast Guard Authorization Act, will give the Coast Guard the resources it needs to protect our waterways and coastlines, to block illegal drug traffickers and smugglers, and to more efficiently procure future Coast Guard cutters. It will authorize the Coast Guard in terms of policies and spending through fiscal years 2018 and 2019. Most importantly, it will take care of the men and women who serve in our Coast Guard, who hail from every State in our great Nation. They do so much.

So we are going to be debating the continuing resolution that will have very significant funding for our military but also for natural disasters. Think about the natural disasters that occurred in the United States in Florida, in Texas, in Louisiana, and other places in the last several months. The Coast Guard undertook thousands of rescue operations—men and women risking their lives, literally, to save their fellow Americans. This bill focuses on them.

In constructing this legislation, we worked in a bipartisan manner for months. However, it appears that the Coast Guard authorization bill, unfortunately, remains stuck.

I serve as the chairman of the subcommittee responsible for the Coast Guard. In Alaska we know all about the men and women of the Coast Guard. I would like to say that prior to 9/11, the Coast Guard was probably the only military service among all five branches that had men and women out there risking their lives every single day for Americans. Unfortunately, since 9/11 and the big challenges we have had from a national security perspective, we have had men and women from all branches of services, every single day, risking their lives. But the Coast Guard does it at home and abroad.

What is happening with this bill? Well, this bill, which is bipartisan, not only contains critical needs and authorizations and policies for our Coast Guard and the men and women who serve, but it also contains provisions of vital importance to our maritime industry and fishing communities. Included in this legislation are important elements of another act, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, which we call VIDA, to address an issue that has been around for years pertaining to the incidental discharges for those in our fishing fleets and maritime fleets.

Currently, vessel owners and operators in the fishing and maritime industry are forced to comply with a patchwork of burdensome State and Federal regulations and laws for vessel ballast water and incidental discharges—the discharges of water that come off the deck of fishing vessels, for example.

Think about it. When thinking about the Constitution and the commerce clause, this is an issue where a fishing vessel moves in different waters in the United States—State waters from one State to another—or a maritime ship goes from one State to another, and it has to comply with a patchwork of different State laws and regulations as it moves through different waters controlled by different States. This creates inefficiencies, adds to business costs, and, particularly in the fishing fleet, inhibits economic prosperity for States and people in the industry, whether in Alaska or other places throughout the country.

So the VIDA provision, which we all worked on and which has very strong bipartisan support, would provide the maritime and fishing industry with a consistent, uniform regulatory structure across the country, restoring efficient and cost-effective commerce while ensuring that environmental protection remains at the highest levels for our ports, waterways, and harbors.

We have been working together for months, and I want to commend my friend from Pennsylvania, Senator CASEY, as we have tried to accommodate the concerns of many other Senators. We changed this part of the Coast Guard bill numerous times to try to address those concerns. I think we have gotten almost every Senator on board, with the exception of just a few.

Notably, one of the measures that we have strong bipartisan support for in

this bill, which would help a number of my constituents—thousands in the fishing industry—is the provision we have agreed on that provides a permanent exemption on incidental vessel discharges for all fishing vessels and small commercial vessels. Right now, believe it or not, if you have a small commercial vessel and you are gutting fish caught on the vessel and you hose down the guts of those fish back into the water, you need a permit from the EPA. Think about that. Think about a regulation that is going to hurt small businesses.

We are trying to encourage all of our colleagues to help us move forward with the Coast Guard bill. We move the National Defense Authorization Act that covers the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines every year, but we should be moving the Coast Guard bill every year, as well, to make sure we are taking care of the men and women in the Coast Guard and we are not forgetting the fifth branch of the military that does so much for our men and women. We also need solutions to the issue of the vessel incidental discharge challenges, and we need to get this provision of the Coast Guard bill unstuck.

I thank my colleagues again for being on the floor with me. Again, this is a bipartisan issue, and we wanted to call out the importance of this issue so that our colleagues in the Senate can say it is time to act.

It is time to move on the Coast Guard bill. It is time to include this very important VIDA provision, and I am hopeful we can do it soon.

I yield to the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to start by commending the Senator from Alaska, Mr. SULLIVAN, for moving this legislation forward and for his work and the work of his staff over many, many months now.

I want to thank our staff, as well, and the staff of Senator WICKER and so many other offices that I will not have an opportunity to name. We are especially grateful for their bipartisan efforts, which every once in a while work around here. I am grateful that Senator SULLIVAN and his team have put in the amount of time that they have.

This legislation is part of broader Coast Guard legislation, the Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act. The so-called C-VIDA Act is critically important to get done this year. As Senator SULLIVAN mentioned, there is bipartisan support, and we should pass it immediately.

When I introduced this legislation back in January of last year, working with Senators WICKER, SULLIVAN, and others, it was included in the larger Coast Guard Authorization Act. That was passed by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee in May of 2017. Since that time, we have conducted extensive negotiations with our colleagues—and that

may be an understatement—to address important environmental as well as enforcement concerns.

This legislation fulfills at least two priorities for Pennsylvania. First, it allows us to be in a position to enact strong environmental protection standards for our waterways in Pennsylvania, and second, it supports our maritime industry. Currently, vessel owners and operators are forced to comply with a patchwork of overly burdensome and confusing Federal and State regulations for vessel ballast water and incidental discharges. This act, the C-VIDA Act, would establish uniform national standards and requirements governing ballast water discharges and other discharges that occur during normal operations of vessels. C-VIDA would provide the maritime industry with a consistent, uniform regulatory structure while ensuring that there are environmental protections in place to protect our Nation's ports and waterways.

The national standard in C-VIDA ensures that vessels with the best on-board environmental equipment are calling at our ports. That is critical for Pennsylvania, which has coastal, inland, and Great Lakes vessel traffic.

There have been concerns raised about the environmental protections, as I mentioned, in the act and the lack of involvement of the EPA and States in developing and enforcing these protections. Once again, I want to commend the work of the staff. Staff from several offices have worked very hard to address these concerns and to ensure that the EPA is involved, that C-VIDA has strong environmental standards, and that we update and revisit these environmental standards as science evolves.

Both ballast water and incidental discharge rules will be developed with the Coast Guard in concurrence with the EPA and in consultation with the States. State-specific incidental discharge standards would remain in place until new Federal regulations are enforced.

The original bill eliminated State standards upon the enactment of the legislation. Additionally, States would have coenforcement of these standards with the Coast Guard. If a State believes there should be a more stringent national standard, then the State can submit a petition to the Coast Guard. If that standard is found to be technologically and economically viable, the State standards will become the new national standard. Senators in both parties have been working in good faith and, as we can see, have made substantial changes to the original legislation.

We have an opportunity to pass an important bill that vessel owners, operators, and maritime labor all agree on. The maritime industry is exactly at the point where we would want other industry sectors to be, developing good business in a clean environment. They have asked the Senate to enact a long-term regulatory framework, and we shouldn't let this opportunity slip by.

I want to yield to Senator WICKER. As I said earlier, I am grateful to have been working with Senator WICKER all these many months and our staffs, as well, and, of course, with Senator SULLIVAN and all those involved.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WICKER. I thank my friend from Pennsylvania and would observe that he has exercised excellent leadership on this issue. It is a very important issue. It is not at the top of the news media's treatment, but it is an important issue, and it is one that we are close to being able to resolve in a bipartisan way. I also want to thank my colleague from Alaska, who has been a champion for this issue.

I would make a couple of points to underscore what my friends have just said.

We are talking about ballast water in the waters of the United States. Some of it gets out; they let some ballast water in, and they have to let some out. It is incidental to operating a boat in the waters of the United States of America.

We want this water to be clean. We want it to be as environmentally pure as possible. That is what this bill attempts to do and attempts to do on a uniform basis, rather than having a patchwork of regulations from State to State and area to area. It would give us one strict national standard regarding the incidental discharge of this ballast water.

The water that gets into our lakes and rivers needs to be safe for the environment, needs to be safe for fish in our American waters, and needs to be safe for marine plant life.

What this bill would do is have the EPA involved in writing the regulations and determining what is safe for American waters. So EPA would be the scientific part, and the Coast Guard would be a part of the enforcement. EPA has readily stated that they are not able to be in the enforcement business in the waters of the United States. So they are going to help with the science, according to this new proposal, and the Coast Guard is going to help with the enforcement.

Who is for this? Well, 300 businesses, labor unions, ports, and terminal operators. They are all in it together, and they all say that this would work. This is not an example of one side getting up some numbers on a partisan basis and deciding to try to run over the others. As a matter of fact, this is such a bipartisan idea that we have over 60 Senators in favor of this proposal.

I just want to assure anyone who has doubts about this legislation that the EPA is going to sign off on these standards. They are going to sign off on standards that are safe, but we are really doing this for jobs and commerce in the United States of America. Imagine you are in the business—the barge business or the commercial maritime business anywhere in the United States—and you have to worry about compliance from State to State. And it

might be just a reporting requirement. Clearly this is a burden on people who want to do the right thing but simply would like to have one standard nationwide to comply with. That is what we are trying to do. We are close.

I would simply say to my friend from Alaska, who has done more work on this really than anybody in my memory, I would observe to the Senator that I think we are close to being able to do this on a bipartisan basis and perhaps putting this as an attachment to a must-pass piece of legislation. I think we can do it because we have demonstrated, through our friend from Pennsylvania and other Democrats and Republicans, that we have been careful to include everyone and to be bipartisan about it.

Would my friend agree that we are at a point where this really needs to be signed into law?

Mr. SULLIVAN. Absolutely. I want to thank Senator WICKER for his leadership on this issue, and I think what we are seeing here in this colloquy is the strength of the bipartisan support for this bill, not only in the Senate but throughout the country. I appreciate my colleague's words about who is supporting it. It is a very broad-based coalition—fishing vessels, passenger vessels, labor unions, the Navy League of the United States, marine terminals, port authorities.

I think both Senator WICKER and Senator CASEY made a very strong point: This is going to keep the highest standards on the environment for our waters. This isn't about cutting corners, but it is going to make these standards uniform, which is what our Nation needs.

What we also need to do is to make sure we pass the Coast Guard bill as well as this important component of it. The men and women of the Coast Guard are serving our Nation just like the other members of the military, and somehow, by delaying this bill, we are undermining their longer term interests. I think the Senate can do a much better job.

I agree with my colleague from Mississippi that we are close. There is clearly bipartisan support across the board for the VIDA Act and the Coast Guard bill, and we are hopeful that within the next few weeks or few months, we are going to get this done, and it is going to benefit literally every State in this great Nation of ours.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Alaska for once again segueing to the larger issue there. Vessel incidental discharge is a very important part but only a part of the Coast Guard authorization. The Senator from Alaska makes the very valid point that we really need to get to a point where we take up the Coast Guard reauthorization on a regular basis because it is a very vital part of our national security. The Coast Guard is actually one of those domestic discretionary programs that provide us

with a great deal of national security. Our Coast Guard currently operates ships in its high-endurance cutter fleet that are more than 45 years old. We need some reforms in the Coast Guard. The Senate and the House need to pay attention to the reauthorization on a very regular basis. So the larger issue is absolutely well-taken on the part of the Senator from Alaska.

I would once again say that my friend the Senator from Alaska has exercised excellent leadership. He has been relentless on the Coast Guard reauthorization and particularly the vessel incidental discharge, and he and others who have fought so hard really deserve some results because there are no substantive objections that can be raised at this point.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi for his strong leadership on this issue as well.

I think we are seeing here that Democrats and Republicans are pretty much all united on this issue. We are hopeful to move not only the VIDA Act but also the broader Coast Guard bill out of the Senate, get it passed, and get it to the President's desk. That is going to be good for the men and women of the Coast Guard, it is going to be good for our maritime and fishing interests, and it is going to be good for the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the massive spending increases included in the proposed budget measure. To propose increasing Federal spending by nearly \$300 billion over the next 2 years, on top of the spending increases already established, is simply beyond comprehension. This is all with a national debt of \$20 trillion a year, and the current deficit is running \$600 billion to \$700 billion. Yet we are about to vote on a bill to abandon self-imposed limits on Federal spending. As anybody who has spent time in Washington will know, once you raise spending limits, you just don't get them back down.

I love bipartisanship, but not when it is bought and paid for with billions of taxpayer dollars. That is precisely what this measure does. If you sprinkle enough money around, you can get bipartisan support.

While I was in the House for 12 years, I kept a journal of events. In December of 2007, when we passed a massive omnibus bill, at that time, I noted in my journal:

The Democrats singled out the funding for the Iraq war, which required a separate vote. The tally board on the House chamber wall explaining the vote said the following: "Agreeing to House amendment to Senate amendment to House amendment."

I said at that time:

That clears it up. But that's the point. Liberal Democrats could vote against the war funding and for more domestic funding. Conservative Republicans could do the opposite.

Enough moderates in the middle would vote for both pieces of legislation to ensure that each passed separately.

I continued:

Then we could all of us, Republicans and Democrats, go beat our collective chests and go home for Christmas. Bipartisanship at its best.

I wrote further in my journal at that time:

All these shenanigans led one Republican colleague to lean over to me on the House floor and muse: "You know, Jeff, sometimes the toughest thing about being a member of Congress is remembering everything you're supposed to be outraged about."

I agreed.

Here we are today, and it is clear what we should be outraged about—a \$300 billion spending hike, a return to trillion-dollar deficits, and an apparent end to any attempt to rein in Federal spending.

Fiscal responsibility is more than a political talking point to trot out when the other guys are in charge. The rules and principles do not change with the legislative session. It should not take hundreds of billions of dollars in government spending to prompt bipartisanship or to secure a budget agreement.

If we Republicans support precisely the kind of reckless spending that we have for so long criticized, it will mean an end of genuine fiscal conservatism in Washington, and it will establish a government without any meaningful spending restraints.

I urge my colleagues to consider their commitment to conservatism and whether their past protests over government spending were anything more than convenient political props. Let's be conservative no matter who is in charge, no matter who is in the White House or who controls each Chamber in Congress.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor, as I have over the past few months, urging the U.S. Senate to come together in a bipartisan fashion to address important issues facing our Nation. The American people expect it. They understand how closely divided we are—49 Democrats, 51 Republicans in the Senate—and for the most controversial issues, 60 votes are required. Unless we work in a bipartisan fashion, we achieve little or nothing.

After many months of difficult negotiation, I stand here today in support of a bipartisan, 2-year budget agreement announced by Leaders MCCONNELL and SCHUMER that will finally produce results for the American people. For too long, this gridlocked Congress has lurched from one continuing resolution—that is a temporary spending bill—to another. That has prevented us from working together to craft appropriations bills that save taxpayers money and that invest in things that are important at every level for our future.

While this budget deal doesn't include everything I would like to see, it certainly includes some highlights of things that I think are critically important for the State of Illinois and our Nation.

I am particularly disappointed that it does not include a solution to the DACA—or Dreamer—crisis that was created by President Trump on September 5 when he announced that he would eliminate the program that provides protection from deportation for almost 800,000 people in the United States. That was over 5 months ago. President Trump challenged this Congress—challenged this Senate—to come up with a legislative solution. As I stand here today, we have not produced it.

I will certainly acknowledge that Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, together with Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader, has charted a course for us next week. We are going to do something in the Senate we haven't seen in a long time. We are going to come to the floor of the Senate and act like Senators. For some of my colleagues, it will be their first-time experience of a bill on the floor, open to amendment and actual debate. Yes, it is going to happen right here. Stay tuned on C-SPAN. Next week could be historic.

It has been over a year and a half since we have had a meaningful debate on the floor, but next week we will. The topic: immigration and DACA. We know we have to. The March 5 deadline is looming, when this program will end by President Trump's prohibition of the program and, at that point, 1,000 young people each day, on average, will lose their protection from deportation and their legal right to work in America. They will walk off the job because we failed to act, unless we get it together.

I am sorry this bill that includes so many good things doesn't include that solution, but we are poised to do it anyway, and I look forward to that debate next week. I hope this agreement will provide a spirit of bipartisanship that will be felt next week when we come together and discuss the fates of hundreds of thousands of Dreamers across the United States.

Let me tell my colleagues what this budget agreement does, which I think is well worth our bipartisan support. It includes a huge investment for America's military. We will prepare our men and women in uniform to be not only ready for battle but to continue to be the strongest and the best military in the world. That is something we have seen go by the boards and, frankly, be ignored in the past, but now we are going to focus on it.

I have the greatest confidence in General Mattis, in terms of his commitment to our military, both in his personal life and in his new role as Secretary of Defense. I believe he will direct the spending appropriately so we can prepare our men and women for

battle and prepare our Nation to defend itself under any threat and, if necessary, use our force for good around the world.

We also make a dramatic investment in nondefense spending. In the past 8 or 10 years, we have seen a dramatic downturn in nondefense spending in our budget. Many people have said nobody will notice. Well, America noticed as we cut back our investment in education, in healthcare, and in so many fundamentals.

There is one particular area I want to highlight. When I had to make a decision as to whether to run for another term in the Senate, I sat down and made a very short list of things I wanted to accomplish or work on if I were given another 6-year term. At the top of that list, of course, were Dreamers, but second was medical research. I came back here and sat down with my colleagues, including two Republicans, Senator ALEXANDER and Senator BLUNT, and my wonderful friend and colleague in leadership, Senator PATTY MURRAY. I said: We need to do something.

Dr. Collins at the National Institutes of Health had told me the problem with medical research is, if it is not certain that next year you will receive a grant to continue your medical research, you get discouraged, and then you start looking for another job. We can't let that happen. We can't lose the best and brightest who are searching for cures to diseases which haunt and plague many families across America.

Dr. Collins suggested 5 percent real growth in the budget of the National Institutes of Health. I salute especially my colleagues, Senator BLUNT, a Republican, and Senator MURRAY, a Democrat. They really made good on that promise. We worked together, and they delivered. This will be the third straight year we have had a more than 5-percent increase in medical research. If there is ever an issue that is bipartisan, it should be this one.

The good news is, this budget agreement will go beyond 5 percent. We are talking in the area of 7 or 8 percent real increases in spending for medical research.

Dr. Collins told me years ago, when he talked about this goal that if we could provide this kind of reliable increase in medical research, dramatic breakthroughs would occur. We are starting to see them. Some of the cancer therapies that are curing cancers today were unthinkable just a few years ago, and there is more to follow.

Think about all of the news reports now about flu and what it is doing to children, some of whom tragically have lost their lives, many of whom stayed home from school, and others around our Nation and the world plagued by influenza each year. At this moment, NIH is working on a universal flu vaccine. If it is discovered, it will be a lifesaver. It will change the basic life pattern that many of us have faced our entire lives. It can happen. I am old

enough to remember when Dr. Jonas Salk came up with the polio vaccine, and that was a breakthrough many of us never imagined. It can happen. This budget will help it happen, and that is why I am so happy to see it in this bill.

I also want to say they have done a great job in providing resources to fight the opioid crisis, the worst addiction epidemic in the history of our Nation.

Funding our community health centers is a critical part of public health and of making certain that basic primary care is available to every American; healthcare for our children through the CHIP program and improving our veterans health facilities. We will be investing, for the first time in years, billions of dollars in new veterans healthcare facilities, some of it long overdue.

Also, we are going to help fix our Nation's aged and broken infrastructure.

This bill provides resources and funding for Florida, Texas, California, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. There are many people from Puerto Rico who live in the city of Chicago. Some of them are extremely close friends. I am happy to report that this bill makes the investment we need to make to get that island back on its feet: \$2 billion to put into electrical infrastructure, in and of itself, can bring Puerto Rico back and restore electrical service to the families who have been waiting months for what each of us takes for granted each and every day. This disaster relief will make a difference in their lives.

How did we achieve this amazing outcome where Democrats and Republicans would come to the floor and praise it? Well, we sat down and made a compromise. We gave on both sides, and we realized it was time to roll up our sleeves, stop squabbling, stop fighting for headlines, stop putting out press releases, and get down to work.

I hope next week that spirit continues when we enter the debate on immigration and DACA. It is my sincere hope that we will have a bipartisan breakthrough on immigration next week—not just for the Dreamers and their families but for the good and the future of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I come to the floor to offer my support for the Bipartisan Budget Act, which we expect to vote on later today.

This bipartisan agreement includes a number of priorities that will benefit Americans, including \$20 billion in new investment and infrastructure over the next 2 years, \$6 billion to combat the opioid epidemic, disaster relief assistance for those impacted by recent hurricanes, funding for community health centers, a permanent repeal of ObamaCare's Independent Payment Advisory Board, or IPAB, and the creation of two select committees to address pension reform and Congress's broken budget process.

Most important is that this bipartisan agreement removes the arbitrary spending caps that have hampered our Armed Forces. For the first time in years, we prioritize our national security by adequately funding the military. Of all the positive aspects of this agreement that will benefit the people of my home State of South Dakota and American families across the country, the addition of \$165 billion in defense funding over the next 2 years is crucial.

As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I have been deeply concerned about the underfunding of our military. If we are going to adequately recover readiness levels that were lost over the last 8 years, as well as modernize our Armed Forces in this increasingly dangerous and complex world, adequately funding our troops is vital. This is the reason I support the Bipartisan Budget Act.

I had previously expressed my strong displeasure for short-term funding measures or CRs, but this agreement makes significant progress toward rebuilding our military, and, finally, after years of underfunding, provides the Department of Defense with a much needed spending boost. This will provide the resources to adequately train and rebuild the Armed Forces at a time of increasing global threats, but don't just take my word for it. Let me quote Defense Secretary James Mattis, who testified before the House Armed Services Committee earlier this week. He said:

Let me be clear: As hard as the last 16 years of war have been on our military, no enemy in the field has done as much to harm the readiness of the United States than the combined impact of the Budget Control Act's defense spending caps, worsened by operating for 10 of the last 11 years under continuing resolutions of varied and unpredictable duration.

Secretary Mattis went on to tell the committee that:

The consequences of not providing a budget are clear . . . should we stumble into a year-long continuing resolution, your military will not be able to provide pay for our troops by the end of the fiscal year; will not recruit the 15,000 Army soldiers and 4,000 Air Force airmen required to fill critical manning shortfalls; we will not maintain our ships at sea with the proper balance between operations and time in port for maintenance; we will ground aircraft due to a lack of maintenance and spare parts; we will deplete the ammunition, training and manpower required to deter war; and delay contracts for vital acquisition programs necessary to modernize the force.

Sadly, we are hearing in the Senate Armed Services Committee many of the Secretary's predictions are already proving true.

Earlier this week, I spoke on this floor about this very issue and described various readiness issues that our Armed Forces are currently facing. Some examples I shared include the F/A-18 fleet taking twice as many man-hours to maintain, with less than 50 percent of the fleet available. Those are the primary aircraft you will see flying off of our carriers in harm's way today.

The maintenance backlog of our submarines. Because of the backlog, 15 nuclear attack submarines have been docked for a total of 177 months or nearly 15 years. That doesn't mean they are being repaired, it means they are sitting at dock because they are not even licensed to dive anymore. What a waste of taxpayer money.

The tragic human cost found in the lack of readiness—as F/A-18 Hornet training programs have had dozens of mishaps over the past several years, some leading to loss of life. We believe some, if not all, of these mishaps could have been avoided with the additional training and maintenance that would have been forthcoming with appropriate funding.

The American people expect us to adequately fund the defense of America next year and every year to come. Providing for the defense of our Nation is the No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government and of this Congress. Nothing else matters if we cannot protect ourselves from our enemies.

I am pleased this agreement finally recognizes the need to eliminate arbitrary budget caps that have put our national security in jeopardy.

The Bipartisan Budget Act is truly bipartisan. There are parts in this that I most certainly very strongly agree with, and there are some areas I would have done differently, but this is a bipartisan agreement and must meet the standards of both Republicans and Democrats. While I would have preferred to see an increase in defense funding without having to pair it with other spending increases, because we need a bipartisan majority of 60 Senators to agree to this proposal, we reluctantly accept the increased spending on nondefense discretionary programs in order to achieve the very necessary and critical increases in our Defense appropriations.

Perhaps one of the more important aspects of this agreement is that, for the first time since the Budget Control Act of 2011, we are able to overcome the demands of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to match defense spending and nondefense spending on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

Under this agreement, defense spending will receive a larger increase than discretionary funding—\$165 billion for defense over the next 2 years, as compared to \$131 for nondefense discretionary spending over the next 2 years. I would have preferred not to raise discretionary spending to this level, but not achieving a path forward without the higher defense limits was simply not an option.

We must still be diligent in addressing our Nation's debt crisis, and we have already begun to take the steps to do so. Just a couple of months ago, we passed historic tax reform that is already helping to unleash the full potential of our economy, thereby bringing in much needed additional revenues. We have also been working with President Trump and the administration to

reduce burdensome regulations and streamline Federal programs so we can save taxpayer money by making the government more efficient. These are positive things that will help to control our debt.

However, the most important thing we must do to rein in spending is to control the skyrocketing costs of mandatory payment programs: Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. In fact, prior to our tax relief plan, we were warned that without taking action to properly manage these programs, by the year 2026, when our country turns 250 years old, spending on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, and servicing the national debt would take up 99 percent of all the Federal revenues generated.

Today, mandatory payments already account for nearly three quarters of our total Federal spending. This is because Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security have never been properly managed, and Congress does not exercise appropriate oversight.

These programs run on autopilot. Given that they are our largest Federal expenditures every year, it is vital for Congress to take an active role in managing these necessary—I will say that again: necessary—mandatory programs in order to get our fiscal house in order. This does not necessarily mean making cuts. It simply means giving Congress the authority to periodically and consistently review them to make them as efficient as possible and to make certain they are available for individuals who need them, both now and in the future.

I am pleased that this agreement creates a joint select committee to address ways to fix our broken budget process, which is desperately needed.

At the end of the day, no amount of cuts to defense and other programs will have a meaningful effect on debt reduction without also controlling the cost of these necessary mandatory-payment programs.

I will wrap up by thanking my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who support this agreement, for recognizing our country's need to adequately fund our troops who sacrifice everything to protect our freedoms. Without a strong military that can deter and defend against aggression, nothing else really matters.

Maintaining the best, strongest military force in the world is vital to keeping Americans safe. By increasing funding now, our troops will be better equipped to do exactly that. We cannot risk a perceived weakness in our force by our enemies, who may wish to draw us into a major conflict. A major conflict or war is not only significantly more costly in terms of dollars, but it has more serious cost in the loss of human life. No one wants to see that, especially if we can avoid it now.

This agreement adequately funds our troops. I intend to vote for it, and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I will be brief and speak briefly in my capacity as vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. There are things here that could be exciting to talk about, and some things are kind of dry, but when we talk about the budget, the consequences affect every single one of us, in every single State, and for multiple generations.

The consequences of the Budget Control Act sequestration cuts since 2011 have been devastating and are going to last for generations. Its impact on military readiness led Defense Secretary Mattis to say that no enemy on the field has done more harm to our military than what we have done to ourselves through sequestration. By not investing in our domestic priorities, we allowed our infrastructure to crumble, care to our veterans to be delayed, and investments in education to fall behind.

The bipartisan budget deal announced yesterday by Senator McCONNELL and Senator SCHUMER is the first step toward providing much-needed relief from sequestration and stability in the appropriations process.

I have followed very carefully what they have been doing. My staff, especially on the Appropriations Committee, has been very much involved. Defense caps have been increased by \$80 billion in fiscal year 2018 and \$85 billion in fiscal year 2019. Nondefense caps are increased by \$63 billion above the caps in fiscal year 2018 and \$68 billion above the caps in fiscal year 2019. Those are the numbers. Let's look at a couple of things these numbers mean.

This additional funding will allow us to increase support our troops, improve care for our veterans, repair our crumbling infrastructure, take care of our seniors, and invest in our economy in real ways.

This bipartisan deal we have worked out—and I stress that it is bipartisan—advances our priorities by guaranteeing that we can make real investments in addressing the opioid crisis. We can all give speeches about the opioid crisis, but speeches don't solve the problem. Actually putting money in there to fund the necessary resources does.

It lets us fund medical research. Keep in mind that we can't turn medical research on and off. We can't say: Oh, you are making great steps in cancer research, but I will stop it for a few years, and then we will come back with money. You have to continue it.

It is also going to improve college affordability. Everywhere I go in Vermont, I hear people say: I haven't been able to buy a house because I have had to borrow so much money for college.

I am particularly pleased that the bill includes an important provision I worked on with my colleague and the chairman, Senator COCHRAN, which is going to improve assistance to our Nation's dairy and cotton farmers. In

Vermont and across the country, it is going to mean immediate relief for struggling dairy farmers who can't wait for the next farm bill for assistance. We will work on these problems in the next farm bill, but in the meantime, until that farm bill comes, we need some immediate assistance.

This deal finally fulfills our promise to communities recovering from recent natural disasters—from wildfires out West, to the shores of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas, and Florida—by providing \$89 billion to help them rebuild. States in the West, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Texas, and Florida are all part of the United States. Just as Vermont sought help when we were hit just a few years ago by a natural disaster and others came to our aid, people I talked with in Vermont say: Of course, we help others in our country.

The agreement also provides continued funding for several healthcare programs that Congress has allowed to expire. We include long overdue funding for community health centers, which have been struggling because of the uncertainty of continued funding for months. Now they will have some certainty.

The bipartisan agreement funds the Special Diabetes Program to make advancements in Type I diabetes. It ensures ambulances can continue to serve rural areas and closes the Medicare Part D coverage gap by 2019. It continues the maternal health home visiting program and permanently repeals the Medicare Therapy Cap, allowing Medicare beneficiaries the certainty of therapy services after an accident or a stroke without an arbitrary cap on coverage. And the bill extends funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program for an additional 4 years, ensuring children and their families can benefit from the program for the next 10 years.

I am pleased that this deal finally extends tax provisions, many of which lapsed in 2016, that will benefit individuals and small businesses. Inexplicably, the \$1.5 trillion Republican tax bill left these important credits orphaned when they passed their corporate tax bill. With this deal, we finally restore them.

Now, not everything I wanted was included in this deal. I see my friend from Texas, a member of the leadership. Not everything he wanted is in here. That is why we have a compromise. Nobody gets everything they want, but we are a lot better off than we were.

I worry about the fact that it does not provide protection for our Nation's Dreamers. These are law-abiding strivers who call America home and seek nothing more than to contribute to our society. They are individuals like Dr. Juan Conde of Vermont, who came to the United States as a child and is studying to treat cancer patients at the Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont. Do we tell him to leave, a man who might be part of those who find a cure for cancer?

I recently wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper in Vermont. They had talked about the stone carvers in Vermont, and I had talked about one stone carver in my letter. My maternal grandfather emigrated from Italy to Vermont. He was a master stone carver from the Friuli region, near the Aviano Air Base in northern Italy, and he talked about the business he started. My mother was then born in South Ryegate, VT. My great-grandparents came to central Vermont from Ireland, on my paternal grandparents' side. My grandfather, after whom I am named, Patrick Leahy, was also a stone carver. I never knew him because, like so many, he died of silicosis of the lungs when my father was a young teenager, but I am proud to be named after him. My wife Marcelle's parents emigrated from Canada. She was born in Vermont and became a medical surgical nurse.

Now, everybody in these families added to and improved our State of Vermont. We must realize that immigrants bring diversity, strength, and skills to our country and make us greater. So when we talk about the Dreamers, we shouldn't forsake their cause. Their cause is our cause. Their dreams are part of the American dreams of my grandparents and my parents-in-law. Those dreams are a part of our American dreams. So we have to continue to work to get legislation passed to protect them.

Leader MCCONNELL has given his word that he will allow votes on legislation the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. I can assure you that the American people expect him to keep his word.

I am also disappointed the agreement does not include the CREATES Act, a bipartisan solution to lowering the cost of prescription drugs by prohibiting the anticompetitive behavior that keeps generic drugs from entering the market. We can all agree that high drug prices are a problem, as President Trump noted in his State of the Union Address, and the CREATES Act offers a commonsense, bipartisan way forward. I hope the Senate passes this important legislation soon.

As I said, the agreement does not contain everything I would like. Very little I have seen in legislation does contain everything I want. But, on balance, it is a good bill for the American people. It allows us to complete the 2018 appropriations process. Through what we call regular order, we can have a real debate on the fiscal year 2019 bills. We will start working on those next week.

So I thank Senator MCCONNELL, and I thank Senator SCHUMER for their hard work in coming to this agreement. I work almost daily with both of them. I know how hard it was. Compromise is not always easy. Often, it is not popular. Well, nobody came here thinking everything was going to be easy, and, if they do, they don't belong in the Senate. You should be here to be a legislator.

I encourage all Senators: Help us pass this bipartisan deal. Allow the Senate Appropriations Committee to resume its work, and we will next week. I hope the House will do the same before tonight's midnight deadline.

I will continue, as I have, working with my friend Chairman COCHRAN in the coming weeks, as I will with all Republicans and all Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee. This agreement will finally let us do the job we are supposed to.

Mr. President, I see the Senator from Texas. I yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to express my gratitude to my friend from Vermont for his service on the Appropriations Committee and working with us specifically on this particular legislation as it relates to the disaster relief aspect of it.

Obviously, my State was devastated by Hurricane Harvey, but I must tell my friend, I have new empathy and understanding for how bound we are together as to what happens in one part of the country should be of concern to those of us in other parts of the country because eventually, sooner or later, disasters are going to visit all of us.

It is good news that the majority leader was able to announce yesterday that we reached a compromise on government funding through not just the end of this fiscal year but next year as well. This agreement ensures that our Armed Forces will finally have the resources they need.

My colleague and fellow Texan MAC THORBERRY, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, along with the senior Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, said it best. They said:

This budget agreement is indispensable for our national security. Without it, our military would not be able to defend our Nation.

Hard stop. Let me repeat that.

This budget agreement is indispensable for our national security. Without it, our military would not be able to defend our Nation.

I think, of all the demands made on the taxpayer dollars that are sent to Washington, DC—and many of them have a lot of merit, some more than others—but I have to say, if you were going to ask me to prioritize how do we appropriate money here in Washington, DC, national security would be job No. 1.

In addition, the funding bill will provide support for our veterans, those who have worn the uniform but have now left the military service, as well as their families, and it will clear the way for new investment in our Nation's infrastructure.

I am grateful to the majority leader for his hard work during this series of long and delicate negotiations. We all know it could not have been easy. Even more than that, I am glad, as I indicated at the outset, that the funding package finally sends disaster relief to

Texas—disaster relief that had been long promised but had been delayed time and time again.

Today, the Senate will be considering supplemental appropriations for disaster aid that affects the victims of Hurricane Maria, Hurricane Harvey, as well as the wildfires and mudslides out West. Last August, Hurricane Harvey made its landfall near Houston, along the gulf coast. When that storm hit, communities like Port Arthur, Beaumont, Rockport, and Victoria were crippled, not to mention Houston, where most of the major media covered, one of the largest cities in the United States.

The National Hurricane Center's official report released last month confirmed what those who lived through the storm already guessed: It was the most significant rainfall event in the United States. During a period of about 5 days, the skies opened up and dropped 50 inches of rain—50 inches of rain. The report called Harvey “unprecedented” and “truly overwhelming.”

As someone who witnessed the devastation firsthand, I can say, with certainty, that those are not exaggerations. It was an event that happens perhaps once every 1,000 years. At least 88 people lost their lives. Many more crashed their vehicles, were electrocuted, were unable to receive medical services, and could not attend school or missed work. They spent last fall tearing the sheetrock out of their homes or their businesses.

Since the time of the storm, Congress has appropriated roughly \$35 billion in Federal aid through two separate emergency bills. Working closely with the majority leader, my Texas colleagues and I were able to increase the first disaster relief bill last fall by adding money for community development block grants. This ensured a larger downpayment for Texas to rebuild and repair.

Thank goodness we were able to get that money then—because of the delays we have seen up until today in additional disaster relief for Hurricane Harvey. Once that money was appropriated, we worked with Dr. Carson, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, to accelerate the allocation of these funds, which he graciously did. Congress followed up by passing a tax relief bill for individuals and small businesses that sustained financial hardships as a result of the hurricane.

Finally, we worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to identify and prioritize key projects for coastal protection to mitigate the impact of future storms. This is not the last hurricane that will hit the coast of Texas or Florida. We need to prepare for the future as well.

In spite of that work, tremendous challenges remain. That is why we kept fighting month after month, and today marks the culmination of our efforts. The supplemental appropriations bill we will consider today includes \$89

billion in disaster relief—\$8 billion more than the House passed last December. It ensures that Texas will have increased access to the pool of community development block grant dollars, and it provides funding and flexibility to ensure that the Army Corps of Engineers are able to carry out necessary projects in the State.

It includes funding to help Texas address lingering transportation issues resulting from Hurricane Harvey and allows us to move forward on flood mitigation projects like the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay.

Finally, it includes a provision—this is important to the agriculture community in my State—to make cotton an eligible commodity under the farm bill safety net. That is really good news for the folks in West Texas, the largest cotton-growing area in the largest cotton-growing State in the Nation, and they have been waiting a long time. Some of them lost bales of cotton or even entire gins because of all the water they sustained as a result of the storms.

I applaud the Texas congressional delegation for taking the first step and passing a disaster supplemental appropriation last year, and I appreciate Governor Abbott and the Senate Appropriations Committee, including Senator LEAHY, for working with us to strengthen the bill in the Senate over the last month or so. Helping Texans recover and rebuild has been my top priority. I am now urging my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle in both Houses, to pass this critical relief bill as soon as possible.

I thank Chairman COCHRAN, the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, for his leadership steering the Appropriations Committee, which has its work cut out for it and has certainly done yeoman's work to date.

I thank the junior Senator from Florida and my other colleagues—particularly Senator CRUZ, my colleague in the Senate—who have fought with us side by side for relief from the numerous disasters that have affected Florida, Texas, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and of course the wildfires and mudslides out West.

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL
JAMES III

Mr. President, on a separate and unrelated note, I wish to recognize the passing of retired Lt. Gen. Daniel James III. He served as the first African-American Adjutant General for my home State, as well as the first African-American Director of the Air National Guard. He was the son of Daniel “Chappie” James, Jr., a fighter pilot who was the first African-American Air Force general to pin on four stars.

A highly decorated command pilot, with approximately 4,000 flying hours, many of those in combat, General James completed two Active-Duty tours in Southeast Asia. He was also inducted into the Texas Military Forces Hall of Honor. Since his burial is taking place today in Arlington Na-

tional Cemetery, I wish to let all those in attendance know I am thinking of them. I know Lieutenant General James was a mentor to my friend General Nichols, the current Adjutant General, but he was a role model for us all. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COUNTERING AMERICA'S ADVERSARIES THROUGH
SANCTIONS ACT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, last year, Congress passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which imposed tough new sanctions on Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

There was broad bipartisan agreement on the need to put these enhanced sanctions into place. The legislation passed in the Senate by a vote of 98 to 2 and in the House by a vote of 419 to 3. In combining both Chambers, the vote was 517 to 5 in favor of enacting these sanctions. The legislation passed with a veto-proof, broad, bipartisan majority. It can be very difficult to get 500 Members of Congress to agree on anything, but imposing sanctions on Vladimir Putin's cronies and those who do business with him should be a no-brainer.

Just last week, we learned that the Trump administration had chosen not to enact these sanctions. Yet, on the same day that the Trump administration argued the sanctions were not necessary, President Trump's own CIA Director said that Russia will continue to attack our democracy. He said: “This threat is not going to go away. The Russians have been at this a long time, and I fully expect they'll continue to be at it.”

In January 2017, the CIA assessed: “Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. Presidential election.”

In January of 2018, the CIA Director confirmed he believes that Russia will continue to assault the 2018 elections.

Yesterday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said that Russia is already trying to impact the 2018 U.S. election and that it will be difficult for the United States to preempt it.

It is clear that we have not done enough to deter Russia from interfering in our democracy, but the Trump administration is choosing not to put in place sanctions on Putin's cronies whom over 99 percent of the Members of Congress supported.

I am a member of the Armed Services Committee. Earlier this week, we received a briefing from Secretary of Defense Mattis on the recently completed national defense strategy. That strategy identifies that Russia is seeking to

discredit and subvert democratic processes all across the world and to shatter the NATO Alliance. Russia is expanding and modernizing its nuclear arsenal and has a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council that provides it veto power in a critical international organization.

In quoting directly from the national defense strategy, Russia is attempting to “change European and Middle East security and economic structures to its favor.” What does it mean, and I quote again, to attempt to “change . . . security . . . structures to its favor”?

One example is Russia’s continued support of the Assad regime in Syria, which continues to use chemical weapons against its own people. Russia uses its role on the Security Council to prevent the international community from holding Assad responsible for these obvious crimes against humanity.

At the same time that President Trump’s Ambassador to the U.N., Nikki Haley, has called Assad’s use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people a tragedy and has called on Russia to allow the Security Council to adopt a resolution that condemns the use of chlorine gas to suffocate children, President Trump is refusing to enact sanctions to punish Russia.

Russia presents real challenges to the security and prosperity of the United States. The purpose of economic sanctions is to impose a cost on Putin and demonstrate that the United States will punish those who threaten this country. That is why over 500 Members of Congress came together to enact new sanctions.

If the United States cannot take meaningful action by enacting sanctions that have been passed on a bipartisan basis, how can we expect to take on the more vexing challenges? This one should be easy.

What kind of signal does it send to Vladimir Putin when the administration puts the Kremlin and Russian plutocrats ahead of the U.S. Capitol, duly elected Members of the U.S. Congress, and the American people?

I urge President Trump to take action on behalf of the American people and follow through on the will of Congress by enacting these sanctions, which are already law. The administration should use the power provided by Congress to punish Vladimir Putin, his inner circle, and those who do business with them to enrich the Putin regime.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO KIRK ALKIRE

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as many of my colleagues know, I have

been coming to the floor every week to do what I consider the favorite part of my duties serving here in the Senate, and that is to talk about someone special in my great State. We call that person our Alaskan of the Week.

I have been told by some of my colleagues that they look forward to this, and I know the pages do, learning a little bit about Alaska. I do this because I certainly want my constituents to know about so many people in their State—what they are doing, how they are impacting not only their community or State but sometimes even the whole country.

Much of what the country knows about Alaska is what they have seen on TV—beautiful glaciers, giant salmon, skiing, hiking, kayaking, boating. We want everyone to come visit Alaska. It will be the trip of a lifetime, guaranteed.

The real beauty of my State rests in the people who call it home. It is a State of rugged, generous, patriotic people devoted to service to their country, their State, and their communities. In many ways, this is what this “Alaskan of the Week” honor is all about.

When we talk about service to our country, Alaska boasts thousands and thousands of Active Duty members of the military, reservists—thousands of reservists—and tens of thousands of veterans, in fact, more veterans per capita than any other State in the country. So many of the veterans in my State have not just served their country but have devoted their time and energy in ways that so many veterans do, helping and caring for other veterans and their families.

Many in the military know it is not easy to serve, but what is often forgotten is that service and the sacrifice of service, particularly military service, often hits the families the hardest. When that service results in the loss of life, the ultimate sacrifice, it is devastating for the families, friends, and loved ones all across communities, all across Alaska, and all across the country. When one of our own loses their life in the fight for freedom, we all grieve. We all grieve.

Today I want to introduce a very special Alaskan, Kirk Alkire, who has devoted countless hours to make sure that those we have lost in battle will never be forgotten and that the families of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice receive a fitting tribute to their sacrifice.

Kirk believes that such a fitting tribute lies in a peak in one of Alaska’s vast, beautiful, almost endless mountain ranges that we have in my great State. This is a peak that actually exists in the Chugach range between Eagle River and Palmer, AK, overlooking the Knik River.

Kirk has been on a quest to name this peak the “Gold Star Peak.” It is actually a mountain that is unnamed right now next to another mountain that is named. That mountain is called

Mount POW/MIA, but he wants to name this other mountain for the Gold Star families who have lost loved ones who were killed in action defending America. Kirk is passionate about this peak, just as he was passionate about the men and women he served with during his 23 years in the Army on Active Duty.

Let me tell you a little bit about Kirk. He was born and raised in San Jose, CA. He enlisted in the Army right out of high school in 1986. He married his high school sweetheart, Angie, and they had a son, Matthew.

During his time on Active Duty in the Army, like so many soldiers, particularly over the last couple decades, he had various assignments in both airborne and light infantry units spread across the United States—really with deployments all over the world—and eventually he was stationed in Alaska. His final assignment was as a first sergeant with the Alaska-based 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division, a unit that we in Alaska lovingly know as simply the 425. It is a unit that we all care about—the only airborne brigade combat team in the entire Asia Pacific, mountain-trained and arctic-tough.

I had the opportunity to visit a couple thousand of those troops from the 425 who are actually serving their country in Afghanistan. These are the best of the best, and they are always forward-deployed.

Kirk and the 425 deployed to Iraq for 15 months during the 2006 to 2007 surge. Kirk’s brigade, during that tough, tough fighting in Iraq during that time, during the surge—one brigade combat team lost 53 paratroopers over that 15 months. Fifty-three American soldiers were killed in action from one brigade, and that doesn’t even touch the numbers that were wounded in action, which were many, many more. That is a devastating number.

Kirk now lives in Eagle River, AK. It is a beautiful community in the mountains overlooking Eagle River near Anchorage. Since his return, he has climbed Mount POW/MIA a few times every year to tend to the flag that exists on that peak, again out of patriotism. It was during one of those hikes that he noticed the beautiful unnamed peak right next to Mount POW/MIA, and then he knew what he needed to do.

Mr. President, it is not easy to name a peak, and in Alaska, we have so many mountains that there are dozens and dozens of mountains that are still not named. It is not easy to name the peak of a mountain. So what did he do? Well, first, he secured support from members of the Eklutna Tribe, whose region in Alaska the mountain occupies, so it was a very respectful action toward our very important Native community in Alaska. He then took letters of support and a petition with over 1,500 signatures from all 50 States, 4 countries, and 1 U.S. territory, to the Alaska Historical Commission. I was

one of the signors of that petition. He presented all of this to the National Geological Survey, which is part of the Department of the Interior, all to get this peak, this mountain, named for the Gold Star families, the Gold Star Peak. So he worked this hard. He worked this very hard.

Today, I have the honor of announcing on the Senate floor that just this morning, the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, which is part of the Department of the Interior, which votes to name mountains, unanimously voted and approved naming that mountain in the Chugach Mountain range "Gold Star Peak." That is great news. That is hard work.

I am honored to have Kirk sitting up in the Gallery today after his hard work where he was working at the Department of the Interior this morning.

I first met Kirk at a Veterans Day parade in Anchorage, where he told me about his quest to get the mountain peak named. That is where I signed the petition. And then I asked him—I said: Kirk, you served your country. Why are you so motivated and focused and determined to do this?

Do you know what he did, Mr. President? He pulled out 53 dog tags that he had in his pocket with the names of every soldier of the 425 who was lost in Iraq in 2006 to 2007 when he was the first sergeant for that brigade. I held them in my hand. It was powerful and moving, and in some ways it was so horrible to look at because these are the lives and names of the best and brightest we have in America. That is why he did it, and that is why he was motivated.

Because of Kirk and the announcement today, families—whether they are from Alaska or anywhere in America who come visit, families who have lost loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice serving their Nation will now be able to look up at Gold Star Peak as they drive up the busy Glenn Highway in Alaska, and they will see that 4,000-foot peak soaring into the sky. All of America will know that their loved ones are not forgotten and that the service and sacrifice of the Gold Star families whom we honor are appreciated and honored by a grateful nation.

So thank you, Kirk, for all the work you have put into this. Congratulations on the vote today. I can't wait to get home and see Gold Star Peak, officially named, and maybe, just maybe, get out there and summit it with you someday.

Thank you for being our Alaskan of the Week.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, Washington, DC, has an addiction problem. Washington, DC, is addicted to spending. Washington, DC, is addicted to debt.

This budget deal takes a giant step backward. Instead of shrinking government, it grows government by 13 percent. In fact, it is the largest spending increase since 2009, the first year President Obama was in office.

I spent 28 years in the private sector before I came to Capitol Hill. I was expected to produce a balanced budget. In fact, better than that, I was expected to produce a budget that actually took in a little bit more than was spent. That is called a profit. This budget deal is blowing our budget. It takes discretionary spending up \$300 billion and only offsets it by one-third.

By looking at numbers, it is pretty clear that Washington, DC, doesn't have a revenue problem if we look at revenue as a percentage of GDP, but if we look at spending as a percentage of GDP, we start to see the real problem. DC doesn't have a revenue problem. DC doesn't need to ask for more money from the American people. Washington, DC, has a spending problem. Controlling government spending is a big challenge, but it is one we have to rise to meet. We must rise to the occasion, not retreat to trillion-dollar deficits.

Funding our national defense is a fundamental requirement laid out in the Constitution. The men and women of our military, including our veterans—absolutely crucial. Funding for our community health centers, something I have been fighting hard for—important for our States. In fact, earlier today I supported a reasonable proposal to address both of these concerns without going rogue on spending.

The question is, At what point is Congress going to look in the mirror and see that the real long-term certainty, the long-term sustainability of these programs we all support, is directly tied to fiscal responsibility?

Even the former Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ADM Mike Mullen, once said, "The most significant threat to our national security is our debt." We have now crossed the \$20 trillion debt threshold, and this bill simply accelerates that.

I left the private sector to run for Congress and came to the Senate to fight for more jobs and less government. I will tell you, I think if you look in the dictionary for the term "more government," you would find this bill. This bill defines "more government."

Washington's broken budget process results in bad budget deals like this one, and we are continuing the cycle of irresponsible budgets which creates more irresponsible budgets. It is an addiction to spending. It is an addiction to debt, but it doesn't have to be that way. Many of our States have figured that out. Many of our States aren't running deficits and large debts.

The first bill I introduced when I arrived in Congress was the Balanced

Budget Accountability Act. It is not complicated. It simply says, if Congress can't pass a balanced budget, then we shouldn't get paid. That is the way it works in the real world. It ought to work the same way here.

When Montanans look at their own budget, whether in their families or in their small businesses, they have to make choices. When they take out a loan, they are expected to pay it back. They can't just borrow money from China like we do, kick the can down the road, and expect that someday there will not be a day of reckoning.

Raising the debt ceiling, growing spending, and spending away our children's and grandchildren's future is irresponsible. We talk about mortgaging our children's future. We have done that. With this bill, we had to take out another credit card for our kids. This is not some glowing bipartisan moment. It is a classic example of disastrous policy—policymaking that is justified under the well-meaning pursuit of compromise. Make no mistake, this compromise is deeply irresponsible and one the Senate should reject. I am ready to work with anyone here to make the tough decisions necessary to get our budget and our fiscal house in order.

Now, think about this past year. We were able to cut through redtape, reducing the Federal Registry by over 30 percent. We were able to put qualified judges on the benches of our Nation's courts—the most circuit judges in the first year of a Presidency dating back to 1891. We were able to pass a once-in-a-generation tax cut package for the American people. If we can do all that, I think we can balance our budget here as well and put forward responsible fiscal leadership and management here in Washington, DC.

Let's roll up our sleeves, and let's get to work. That is what we were elected to do. Until then, I will continue to stand and continue to fight against this addiction to spending and debt of Washington, DC.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

TAX REFORM

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come before you today to talk about the historic tax reform legislation that was passed in the U.S. Congress and signed into law by the President at the end of the year and talk about what we learned since then, even in the last week.

We created this legislation with two goals in mind. One was to provide middle-class tax relief to families. The other was to provide our businesses and our workers with a more competitive tax code. This is something that became very clear to all of us as we looked at it, that unfortunately we were asking our workers here in America to compete with one arm tied behind their backs because of our Tax Code. It has been a couple of months now since this legislation became law, and both of those two goals we set out

are being achieved. It is already happening.

In January, the Internal Revenue Service updated its tables for withholding. In other words, they went to employers and said: Because of the tax cuts, you should withhold less money in every paycheck.

That is happening. The Treasury Department tells us that 90 percent of American workers are having their withholding changed in a way that is positive for them, meaning that Uncle Sam is taking less out of their paychecks. People are already starting to see that. Tomorrow is Friday—another payday—and you are probably going to see that on your paycheck tomorrow or a week from tomorrow, if you haven't already seen it. That means that people are actually getting relief directly for themselves and their families. This is more take-home pay for folks and enables people to have a better family budget.

With higher healthcare costs and other costs for years and years and no salary increase, having a little more in the family budget is really important to folks, and it is making a difference. In Ohio, for a family of four at the median-income level, which is about \$70,000 a year, this means about a \$2,000-a-year savings. That is significant for people. I have talked to a lot of constituents who were beginning to see this, and they are realizing they have a little more money for retirement, maybe for healthcare, maybe to help their kids or their grandkids. That is good.

There is something else that is in the bill that hasn't gotten much attention; that is, the fact that there were 3 million Americans who were paying taxes previously, who had income tax liability, who do not now. Why? Because when you lower the tax rate, some of these people, who are typically the working poor—in other words, they are working, but they are not making much in income—now have the ability to get out from under taxes altogether. This also encourages more people to not be dependent on a government program but to go to work, if there is this lower tax rate at the lower end of the economic scale. So that is good too. That is in this tax legislation.

More than 3 million people do not have tax liability anymore. Part of it is because of the lower rates we talked about. Again, the proof is in the paycheck on that one. Part of it is because in this legislation, we double the standard deduction and also double the child credit and make it more refundable than it already is. That is happening, and it is working. That goal has already been achieved—not by this Congress but by the people we represent, the American people and families across this great country. We are happy to see that.

The second part of this is that a more competitive business code is benefiting workers very directly. This is something we are hearing about just about

every day. Over 300 businesses have made announcements saying: You know what, we are going to give people a bonus because of the tax reform legislation. We are going to give our employees a little higher starting wage. We are going to put more in the 401(k)s or more in the defined benefit pension plan. Maybe we are going to give a little more to charity, or maybe we are going to invest more in equipment and tools so that people can be more productive, because productivity, as we know, is key to getting wages up and improving the economy. We are hearing this across the board all over the country.

I have seen this in Ohio. I have been to companies in my hometown of Cincinnati, in Columbus, OH, in Dayton, OH, and in Cleveland just in the last month. I have gone and visited with these companies while they have been making announcements and have talked to the employees in a townhall meeting setting, where they have had the opportunity to have a back-and-forth as to what this tax reform measure means to them. Yes, it means direct tax cuts for them, as it does for about 90 percent of American workers. On top of that, it means that because these businesses now have the ability to be more competitive, it makes them more competitive, and they are already getting some of the benefits from that.

Last week, I joined President Trump in Cincinnati at one of these companies. It is called the Sheffer Corporation. This is a small manufacturing business that has decided to make new investments in its plant and equipment. That is going to help make it more competitive and make its workers more productive. It competes globally. It is an incredible company. It makes pneumatic and hydraulic cylinders. It makes them this big, and it makes huge ones. It competes all around the world, and it is doing a great job. Frankly, this tax reform bill really helped them.

On top of that investment it is making, it is also making a direct investment in its employees. Every employee—all of the 126 people who work there—received a \$1,000 bonus check after the tax legislation was signed into law. So it is helping them.

The company's president is a guy named Jeff Norris. Just before the visit we had earlier this week, he said that for some people in Washington, that is crumbs, referring to how some people have called getting this tax relief crumbs. He said: "But for the Sheffer people, we consider that fine dining." Another way to put it is, this makes a difference for people in their lives and for their families.

This was all made possible by lowering the tax rate. Of the developed countries around the world, of the countries that are industrialized, we had the highest statutory tax rate of all of the countries. So our 35 percent rate was higher than in places in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and so on.

We were getting higher than our competitors—Canada, Mexico, and so on—and that is one reason people were choosing to shift overseas, to take, literally, the company and move it overseas. That is called an inversion.

Last year, we were told that three times as many American companies were bought by foreign companies as the other way around. Think about that. Three times as many American companies were bought by foreign companies, which was largely driven by this Tax Code.

We have also heard from Ernst & Young, which is a big accounting firm. It did an analysis, and it said that 4,700 American companies have become foreign companies over the past 10 years or so because of the Tax Code. If we had had the kind of Tax Code that we just put in place with this legislation that was passed here, those companies would still be American companies. Those are 4,700 companies. Those are a lot of people, and that is a lot of investment.

We studied this in the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations—a bipartisan investigation—and looked at what happens when these companies go overseas. It is probably no surprise to you that they take their jobs and investments with them. So when a company pulls up stakes here and goes overseas, it is not just about moving one's corporate headquarters; we found it is also about having less employment here directly but also indirectly because companies that supply them—contractors—have less employment, and they are also making their investments increasingly overseas.

As we studied this, we also found that companies were actually taking the money they had made overseas and were keeping it all overseas rather than bringing it back here and repatriating it, even though they were U.S. companies. This is something we studied as part of a bipartisan Finance Committee working group I cochaired with Senator CHUCK SCHUMER. We found that unless you lowered this rate and went to a more competitive international system, you were not going to get that money back.

Part of what this will do is what we talked about in terms of improving the lives of workers here in America, but part of what it will also do is repatriate. It will bring back some of that money that has been stuck overseas, the so-called lockout effect. How much is that? Economists think it is somewhere around \$3 trillion; some say more.

You might have seen recently that Apple announced that it was bringing hundreds of billions back here, repatriating that money back here. They are also going to pay I think about \$38 billion in taxes to the U.S. Treasury, but that is worth it to them to bring back that money. We want them to bring that money here. Why? We don't want it invested overseas in a research and development facility there or in a

factory there; we want it invested here, right? That is what this tax reform does.

That is why, as exciting as it is for these workers and for these companies to make these decisions, and their helping people right now is very important, I think of the bigger investments we are going to hear of down the line. The next time a big American company that has a global business asks, "Where am I going to put my factory? Where am I going to do my research and development?" it is going to say, "We are going to do it here in America." That is what is very exciting to me.

Let's get back to having wages that are going up consistently rather than the relatively flat wages we have seen really over the past couple of decades, and let's see a renewal of hope and opportunity here. I think this is exciting, and I think we will see more of it.

Just in the past week, by the way, we have seen seven more major companies announce higher compensation for their employees: CVS in the last week, Tyson in the last week, Chipotle, Best Buy, Charter Communications, Lowe's, FedEx. This is just in the last week. In total, these companies have 1.3 million employees who are now going to benefit on top of all of the other 300 announcements we talked about earlier. They are going to benefit from increased investments that these businesses will be able to make because of this new tax reform. This is good news, and it is good news for the people I represent.

In Ohio, some of our larger employers have already made their announcements. Fifth Third Bank, headquartered in Cincinnati, employs 8,800 Ohioans and announced it will raise its base wage for entry-level people and give \$1,000 bonuses to all of its 13,500 employees.

Nationwide Insurance, headquartered in Columbus, employs 15,000 Ohioans. It is going to increase 401(k) matches, so the match that it gives to people's 401(k) contributions is going to increase. That is great for one's retirement savings. It is going to do that for 33,000 employees around the country. It is also going to give \$1,000 bonuses to 29,000 of its employees.

JPMorgan is probably the third biggest employer in Ohio now of all the private sector employers. It employs about 21,000 Ohioans, mainly in the Columbus area. Some of you know that because it is a huge presence in Polaris North Columbus. It has announced it is going to add 4,000 new jobs. Its base wage is going to be raised for 22,000 employees. It is going to increase its charitable donations and its small business lending. It says it is all because of this tax reform legislation. That is good news.

Our biggest employer in Ohio is Walmart. It may be in your State too. There are 50,000 Ohioans who work for Walmart. It has announced it is going to raise its base wage for all hourly employees, distribute \$1,000 bonuses,

expand maternity and parental leave opportunities, and increase funds for employee adoption expenses. It is our largest employer.

Other Ohio employers that have announced something include Fiat Chrysler and the Jeep plant, up in Toledo, which we are so proud of, and Home Depot. We talked earlier about Lowe's and AT&T. They have all announced increased investments in their operations and their workers as a result of the tax reform.

I am excited about this. It is actually working in a way that many of us had hoped it would and said it would. Really, there have been more announcements even than I think the most optimistic tax reform advocates expected. I think we are going to see a lot more over time because ultimately this is about making the United States a better place to do business.

By the way, some of these companies are not American companies; they are foreign companies that choose to invest in America. Foreign direct investment is something we encourage because that brings more jobs here to this country. So if a company like Honda, which is a big auto employer in Ohio, chooses to invest more in Ohio rather than in Japan or China or Germany or elsewhere because of this tax reform legislation, that is also important. We are going to see more and more of that happening, in my view, because they are looking at the lower rates, and they are looking at the ability to expense what they have purchased more quickly in terms of plants and equipment. This immediate expensing is very important in this legislation for companies like that and manufacturers. So this is not just about American companies staying here rather than going overseas; it is also about foreign companies that are choosing to come here and to hire American workers, which is also good for us.

I am hoping that a combination of this tax reform and what is being done on the regulatory front to make regulations better—particularly for smaller businesses that were feeling a lot of that burden—and American hard work and ingenuity, as well as rewarding that ingenuity better, is going to help America compete in this global marketplace in ways we haven't done for many years.

The historic tax reform is basically putting America back in a position in which people are now going to look to us again and say: America is the kind of model that I want to follow.

The American free enterprise system and the system where, if you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead, where you can achieve your dream in life, was something some people were beginning to question. Now I think this helps to polish our image, which has become somewhat tarnished as wages had been flat and we were kind of stuck in low economic growth—1½ to 2 percent growth. Now I think we

have the opportunity to break out more and to be that beacon of hope and opportunity for the rest of the world and, most importantly, to give people the opportunity to achieve their American dreams, whatever they are.

Mr. President, I want to talk about another topic, and this is not a happy topic. It is also in the news these days, as are the growing economy and the increased jobs and the benefits of the tax reform. But this is news that you will also see on the front pages and on the nightly news of your local TV stations. It is unfortunate news, and that is the fact that we still have this growing epidemic of drug use in this country that is connected to opioids. This is something that has grown over time and kind of started with prescription drug use, which grew pretty dramatically back in the 2000s. Then it became heroin. Probably 3 or 4 years ago, one began to see people shift from heroin to other forms of opioids that are called synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl or carfentanil.

Unfortunately, this issue has gripped our country. In my State in particular—and Ohio is one of the States that have been hardest hit—we have more people addicted, we have more people who are overdosing from these drugs, and we have more people who are dying because of the overdoses than ever before. Last year, in 2017, we had more overdose deaths than we had in 2016.

I think we have good ideas to begin to turn the tide. This Congress has started to work on that, and I applaud Congress for that. We are beginning to see some of those programs work, but we have a long way to go.

One reason that I think the legislation we are going to vote on later today is so important is that it provides more funding to be able to deal with the opioid crisis. We need it. I wish we didn't. We need it. We need it for better prevention and education to keep people from getting into the funnel of addiction in the first place. We also need it for treatment, and we need it for longer term recovery, which is sometimes quite expensive, but it requires us to look at this issue in different ways.

Historically, short-term treatment programs have not been very successful. A lot of people go through these treatment programs and come out the other end. They might be clean for a while, but typically there are a lot of people who go back to their addictions. The recidivism rate is very high.

What we want is for people to go through treatment and get clean at the other end and be able to get back on their feet and restore their ties to their families, their work, and their communities. This longer term recovery, in my view, after studying this issue for many years, is a very important part of that. It is providing, yes, the medically assisted drug treatment that is sometimes needed for one to be able to get through the addiction, and to get into

a good treatment program often is assisted through medically assisted treatment. Yet what is more important to me as I look at this and talk to a lot of people—I have talked to probably 1,000 addicts and recovering addicts just in the last couple of years in Ohio—is to surround these people with the right kind of counseling and the right kind of support, including peer support—others who have been through addiction and recovery and have gotten on their feet, those who are recovering addicts. There is a cost to that.

Some would ask: Well, is this really the Federal Government's role? I would say yes. It is a national epidemic, and it needs to be approached at every level—the national level, the State level, and the local level. Ultimately, it is not going to be solved here in Washington; it is going to be solved in our communities.

I will tell you that the degree of damage that this is causing to our communities, our families, our budgets locally, and our criminal justice system requires us to take a more aggressive role at the national level. Take best practices from around the States and local communities and spread those nationally as an example. Provide seed money, combined with local money, so they can actually get treatment programs up and going in areas where people cannot get treatment. Even though they are ready to deal with their addictions, they don't have beds and don't have places to go.

The Federal Government also plays a role already. With Medicaid reimbursement, for instance, if you have a treatment center and if you are providing MAT, or medically assisted treatment, and you have more than 16 beds, you cannot get Medicaid reimbursement. That doesn't make any sense. We have some very good treatment centers in Ohio that have 16 beds, but they could have twice that many or even three times that many and provide more help. Yet, because of the way the Federal Government chooses to reimburse, that is not practical. So there are issues with which the government has to be involved.

In my home State of Ohio, overdose deaths are the No. 1 cause of death in my State. Nationally, among those who are under 50, it is the No. 1 cause of death. In Ohio, we had more deaths from overdoses from synthetic opioids—the new drugs like fentanyl and carfentanil—than we did anything else. About 58 percent of our deaths were from the synthetic opioids. So it is changing from prescription drugs to heroin and now to these synthetic drugs.

We have a real crisis on our hands. It is the No. 1 cause of crime in my community and throughout my State. It probably is in yours too. If you think maybe you are not affected by it because you don't have a family member or friend or coworker who was affected, then you don't see it clearly. I would suggest we are all affected because we

are all paying for it in additional healthcare costs, additional costs for prosecutions and incarcerations, additional costs in crime in our communities, in families being torn apart, and more kids in foster care under State supervision, in some way, because we have record numbers now in my home State because of their parents being addicted. This is a huge issue, and I think it is one we need to focus on at every level, including at the national level.

With regard to fentanyl, just a very little bit, a few flakes of it, can kill you. It is incredibly powerful. It is considered to be 50 times more powerful than heroin. It is cheap, it is easily accessible, and it can be spread to other drugs, which is increasingly happening. We are told by law enforcement that it is being used now with cocaine and even, in some cases, marijuana. Certainly it is packaged into pills to make it look like a prescription drug when it is really fentanyl-laced. This stuff can be just deadly.

This week I had some people come into my office talking about it, and I asked them whether they thought we were turning the tide, and their answer was no because of the fentanyl, this new drug that is inexpensive, this synthetic that is coming into our country, believe it or not, primarily from overseas through the U.S. mail system.

Just last week, in Logan County, OH, a 12-year-old girl brought a plastic bag containing fentanyl to her middle school. Thankfully, a teacher found the bag and called the police to safely remove the drug. Think about that. In that middle school, this drug could have killed numerous kids. While police are looking into how this possibly could have ended up in the hands of a 12-year-old, how fentanyl ends up in the United States is no mystery. We now know the answer to that. We have done studies on it.

We spent a yearlong investigation looking into this issue, and what we found out was pretty shocking, which is fentanyl, which is this growing drug killing more people in Ohio than any other drug now, doesn't come in the way you might think, maybe overland. It typically comes through the U.S. mail system. Primarily, it comes from China.

Does it come from other countries? Yes. Sometimes it is shipped from China to another country and then to the United States. Some other countries may now be making it but law enforcement tells me it is primarily through the mail system and primarily from China.

Now, you might ask, why is it coming through the mail system, and why are we letting that happen? Well, it is happening because if you try to send it through one of the private carriers like DHL or FedEx or UPS, you have to provide a lot of information on the package. You probably know this if you are shipping stuff. You have to provide what is in it, where it is from, and

where it is going. You have to provide that in advance, and it is provided electronically in advance to law enforcement. In Ohio, the DHS and UPS can go to the facilities and target a package and say: Uh-huh. This is from a certain region. This has a certain suspicious address where it is going, maybe it is an abandoned warehouse and post office box where they know there have been drugs shipped before, maybe the contents don't add up and they can target that package and get that package offline and destroy it. By the way, when they do that, trust me, they are wearing gloves and masks in special rooms now where they can try to avoid being damaged by this drug because they are incredibly dangerous; whereas, in the U.S. mail system, there is not a requirement.

Now they are starting to require it more, and this year, thanks to the work of some of us who have been pushing this for a couple of years now, they are doing a better job than last year, but this last year only 38 percent of packages had electronic advanced data on it—only 38 percent—whereas, with these other carriers, it is 100 percent. Of that 38 percent, sadly, 20 percent of the time, when law enforcement said: OK, we hear this information about this package, we want to pull it off, 20 percent of the time the post office couldn't produce the package so it went to the post office box or abandoned warehouse. A package this big can have hundreds of thousands of people affected. Just think about it, just a few grams of this can kill you. So the post office needs to provide that same sort of data.

We also found, in our 1-year study of this, the data the post office did provide, origin often was indecipherable by security people because it wasn't information that was helpful, maybe a lot of numbers or characters that did not let people know what was in it, where it was going, where it was from.

It is good we are beginning to make progress on this, but I think we should have a requirement in law that says the post office has to do what these other private carriers do, which is require people who want to ship something into our communities to have this information so our law enforcement has a chance to find these packages and to stop this poison from coming into our neighborhoods.

Is this the only solution? No. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act that I coauthored that passed this place over a year ago now is beginning to work on prevention, treatment, and recovery. We talked about that earlier.

We need to do more to help our first responders, to give them the Narcan they need to reverse the effects of these overdoses and to save lives. We need to get people into these programs rather than the revolving door of people being addicted, having an overdose, being saved, and then having an overdose again. That is all critical. In fact,

that is the most important part, but let's at least—at least—stop some of this poison that is coming in through our own U.S. Government Postal Service. By the way, postal employees totally agree. They don't want to be a conduit for this stuff. They certainly don't want to be exposed to it.

There are some horrible stories of people who were exposed because with these international packages coming in, sometimes there is some leakage.

One story that is probably one that would get the attention of every law enforcement official in America is, there is a guy in Ohio, a law enforcement officer. He pulled over two individuals. He went up to the car. He pulled them over for a traffic violation, but he noticed they spread some white powder around the car to try to hide it. Wisely, he realized this might be something dangerous. He put on his mask and gloves and found it was fentanyl.

He arrested these two individuals. They got booked. He went down to the police station. This officer was a big guy, by the way—6 feet 2 inches, over 200 pounds, in good shape. He looked down on his shirt when he was in the police station talking to his fellow officers, and he saw some flecks on his shirt of something. So he reached over and brushed it off with his hands like that. It was fentanyl.

Immediately he overdosed. He became unconscious, lying on the floor. Three times Narcan was administered to try to save his life. They had to rush him to the emergency room ultimately to save his life. As his police chief said: If we hadn't been right there, this police officer would not be with us today. Think if he had gone home and hugged his kids.

This stuff is dangerous. It is dangerous for our postal employees, it is dangerous for our Customs and Border Protection people who bravely are out there every day trying to stop this stuff. It is dangerous to the postal inspectors and dangerous for the Drug Enforcement Agency individuals. We need to give them every tool we can to let them know where the suspect packages are so they can stop this stuff. At a minimum, what will happen is there will be less supply, and there will be higher prices on the street. That is not a bad thing because the cost of this drug is one reason it has become so popular and so deadly.

Our legislation is called the STOP Act. It simply says: Let's do what we should have done many years ago and require this information. After 9/11, this Congress got together and said: We are worried about stuff being shipped into this country, and so we are going to require private carriers to provide this. In 2002, there was legislation passed. That was 15 years ago, almost 16 years ago now. That legislation said at the time: You have to do this if you are the FedExes or UPSes of the world, but for the post office, we recommend you do it. We want you to do a study on it.

The thought was, in Congress, that they would need some time but that they would be able to do it as well—again, it has been almost 16 years. Now we have this immediate problem, which is, in my view, a crisis, and it is a public health problem. It falls on us as the Federal Government to deal with it—this Congress to deal with it.

I know there are those in the Postal Service who are concerned about whether they can require other countries to provide this data. Do you know what? We provide it for all our packages going to them. Again, most countries in the world are now being asked to do it. The rest of the countries ought to be asked. Certainly, China ought to be required to do it for all their packages. They now say about half of the packages from China have some sort of information. It needs to be better information. We also need China to do more.

After our report came out last week, Chinese Government officials responded and said they were concerned. They wanted to do more to cooperate with the United States. That was good. I am glad to hear that, but, frankly, we have been hearing that for a while.

I was in China last year on a congressional delegation. I raised this information with Premier Li, the No. 2 ranking official in the government there. Again, we heard the right things. We want to help to be able to stop this at the source. We need more help.

We believe there are thousands of chemists or chemical companies in China that are producing this poison. Again, I am not suggesting it is exclusively China, but we are told by law enforcement it is still primarily from China. Let's shut them down.

They have made illegal some of the precursors, some of the drugs that go into making this fentanyl. Let's make sure that is being enforced. Let's make it an illegal activity to ship it. Let's do the prosecutions that are necessary and arrest people.

There were two individuals who were indicted here in the United States who were Chinese nationals. My understanding is, they have yet to be prosecuted, and they have been indicted for shipping poisons into our communities and killing our people.

Yes, there is a lot that has to be done here. We need to be sure we are doing a better job on prevention and education to keep people from falling into the addiction in the first place. We need to do much better on treatment and recovery. We talked about that earlier. At a minimum, let's protect this country. So I encourage my colleagues, if you haven't already cosponsored the STOP Act—Senator AMY KLOBUCHAR and I introduced this legislation together last year. We want your help. We would love to have your cosponsorship. We have about 30 cosponsors now. It is bipartisan. We need to get 100 cosponsors. Everybody in this Chamber should be for this. We

should be able to at least tell our own U.S. post office: Help law enforcement to stop this poison. That is part of the answer here, along with so many other things we need to do to keep the fentanyl off the streets, to keep the overdoses and the death toll from rising.

Again, I thank my colleagues for including in the legislation we are going to vote on later today additional funding over the next 2 years. I will say, with regard to that funding, which is significant—it is an unprecedented amount—we have increased the funding over this fiscal year from last fiscal year by \$1.4 billion. That is through the so-called CURES Act and CARA legislation. Now we have additional funding, \$3 billion this year and \$3 billion next year. I do think there is a good framework for spending this money and that would be the programs in the CARA legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. There are about a dozen different programs, including recovery programs, including helping pregnant women who are addicted to help them avoid having their addiction passed along to their kids. This is a big issue in our States right now. All of our neonatal units back home in our hospitals are dealing with this.

There is legislation to help our first responders with training and with Narcan, certainly to help them deal with this fentanyl danger they face, the risk they face every day.

We have the programs in place. There is not adequate funding in some of these programs to respond to the many requests coming in. So this is one place for us to provide some help.

The CURES legislation goes directly to the States. That legislation was passed as part of an appropriations process to help the States be able to identify where they had the highest priority. Some of that, frankly, is in training individuals who can be counselors.

We talked about the importance of not just providing medicine to help people get over their addiction but to also surround them with the kind of treatment they need, the kind of support they need. In other States, it was a matter of building those treatment facilities. One million dollars of this, or so, was used in Columbus, OH, for an innovative program, where there is now a new emergency room that is dedicated to people who overdose, which is better for the individual who overdoses and better for the taxpayer, rather than taking them to an emergency room that has the capability to handle gunshot wounds and trauma and so on. This is dedicated just to overdoses. Most significantly, in this same facility where the overdoses go, you have a 50-bed treatment center. So often what we find is that people are treated for the overdose, maybe in a detox unit, but then there is no treatment center. There is no treatment bed available, so that person goes back to

the community, back to the old neighborhood.

During that waiting period, even though they are ready for treatment as they come out of the overdose—because often they have kind of seen their life flash before their eyes—there is not the availability and, sure enough, that person gets back into the use of the drug—heroin, fentanyl, prescription drugs—and ends up overdosing again, sometimes again and again and again. You hear this from your first responders.

Go to your firehouse, and you will hear in every firehouse in America, I will guarantee you, about this issue. I will guarantee that in most firehouses—certainly all of them that I have been to in Ohio, and I have been to many—it is the No. 1 thing people are doing. In other words, there are more calls for overdoses than there are calls for fires. There are more calls for overdoses than there are calls for heart attacks.

This is an issue that, again, affects every one of us whether we feel it directly or not. So this is an opportunity for us to get these people into the emergency room setting to save their lives, using this miracle drug, Narcan, using the best help of our incredible medical professionals, who are doing an awesome job on the frontlines, but then to get them right into treatment, to say: By the way, here is an opportunity; come right now. We think that is going to close that gap and help to avoid this issue of people not getting the help you want them to get. Probably 8 out of 10 people in Ohio are not getting the treatment they should be getting.

So I am encouraging my colleagues to vote for the legislation this afternoon or this evening, whenever we vote on it, in part, because it does have that legislation in it regarding opioids. It does have this new funding—an unprecedented level of funding.

It is going to be left to the Appropriations Committees here to deal with how it is spent. Again, I know they have a lot of great ideas, including legislation that we have already passed called the CARA Act, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. We spent 3 years putting together that legislation. We had five conferences here in Washington. We got best practices from around the country. This is all about sending funds out to programs that have been studied and that do have good results. It is not just a matter of throwing money after this problem. We have to be sure that it is done effectively and that, again, it leverages more money at the local level.

The million dollars I talked about that went into this treatment center in Columbus, OH—that was matched by county money, it was matched by State money, it was matched by private-sector money and individuals who were giving funds to this because they realized what a problem it is. That is how we should work together. Ultimately, this is not going to be solved

here in Washington, DC. It is going to be solved in our communities. It is going to be solved in our families. It is going to be solved in our hearts. This is an issue that ultimately is going to require all of us getting engaged on.

Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer for the time today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

GERBER SPOKESBABY OF 2018

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, there is good news, there is great news, and then there is the story of Lucas Warren of Dalton, GA. I don't personally know Lucas. In fact, he is only 18 months old. So he, of course, has the good sense not to engage with or get to know politicians, especially in Washington. But like so many millions of Americans who have not met Lucas, I will never forget him.

Yesterday, the Gerber baby food company selected little Lucas as its "Gerber Spokesbaby" for the year 2018. Lucas' winning photograph, sent in by his parents Jason and Cortney, was selected from more than 140,000 entries. Even at a glance, it is not at all hard to see why.

This picture deserves much more than just a mere glance. I don't just mean because of the bow tie. You see, Lucas Warren was born with Down syndrome, which is to say that Jason and Cortney Warren are among those Americans blessed to know, to love, and to be loved by someone with Down syndrome. According to the Global Down Syndrome Foundation, only 38 percent of Americans are so lucky.

Those of us who are so lucky know the warmth and the tender cheer of individuals with Down syndrome—the warmth and tender cheer they carry with them everywhere they go. With little more than a smile, like Lucas' in this picture, they make gentle the life of the world. All of us are born with that mission, but we don't always fulfill it. Children like Lucas and parents like the Warrens don't just carry their share of that burden. They carry some of ours too. We owe them more than we can possibly know.

"I am a child of God," begins a children's song of my faith.

And He has sent me here,
Has given me an earthly home
With parents kind and dear.
I am a child of God,
And so my needs are great.

Those lyrics take on a particularly special poignancy when you know families with special needs children, for children with special needs not only deserve special love; they give it. They give it unceasingly and unreservedly, just like the God who first knitted them together in their mother's wombs.

We should all commend the Gerber baby food company for its choice of its new spokesperson and especially thank the Warrens for the gift of little Lucas.

In Washington, we are often reminded of the old maxim that there are no solutions in this life, only tradeoffs. Sometimes, it is tempting to believe that this is true, but this photograph proves otherwise. In this fallen world of ours, that smile—that little boy—is pure good, a blessing to us all.

Yesterday, after the announcement, Lucas' mom Cortney said:

He may have Down syndrome, but he's always Lucas first. . . . we're hoping when he grows up and looks back on this, he'll be proud of himself and not ashamed of his disability.

So should we all hope for Lucas and for the rest of the world too.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, I wish to speak about some issues relating to the spending bill and things that happened in Louisiana.

Louisiana had two catastrophic floods in 2016 that affected not just our State but also Texas and Mississippi, with over 100,000 disaster victims who became eligible for SBA—Small Business Administration—disaster assistance loans.

Here is one picture. Oh my gosh. Here is the window. The water is as high inside the patio area as outside, and the woman has a face of despair.

Here is another picture, which shows a family being evacuated in a boat. Obviously, it is a neighborhood with stop signs and nice trees and streetlights, and they are being evacuated. We can imagine what their family home looked like.

Fifty-six of Louisiana's sixty-four parishes had Federal disaster declarations. The August storm alone caused an estimated \$10 billion in damage to private property, which, apart from hurricanes, made it the most expensive U.S. disaster in the last 100 years.

The most devastating thing was how little time people had to react. The storm was missing key cyclone characteristics, so the National Hurricane Center had no expectation of how devastating the storm would be, and the first parishes hit by the flooding had no time to evacuate or prepare.

Many families who were impacted by the great floods of 2016 in Louisiana lived outside what are called special flood hazard zones and were not required to and did not carry flood insurance. Indeed, about 80 percent of flooded homes did not have flood insurance.

Last year, I worked with the Louisiana delegation to obtain about \$2 billion in community development block grants to help cover portions of those uninsured losses for Louisiana families and small businesses. We also got about \$500 million in disaster tax relief to help with the uncompensated disaster losses. But with CDBG—community development block grant—funding, which is distributed through the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program, it is arcane—there is something which is an arcane and arbitrary rule called duplication of benefits. The duplication of benefits rule states that if an individual is eligible for and received a loan from the Small Business Administration, that individual is ineligible for a grant from the Restore Louisiana Homeowner Assistance Program. The rule makes no sense. An individual who did the right thing and drew upon all available resources to rebuild their home and begin to put their life back together is denied relief.

Language that fixed this issue was included in the disaster supplemental passed by the House last year. The Senate was prepared to consider this in December, but the legislation was delayed—frankly, held hostage—by the minority party using it to gain leverage to get more government spending as part of the budget negotiations we are now in.

Now that this disaster supplemental has been rolled into the budget negotiations, we saw that the provision to fix the duplication of benefits issue was added, but it only covered Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. So I worked with my fellow Louisiana Senator, Mr. KENNEDY, and members of the Appropriations Committee to make sure Louisiana is treated the same as Texas and other States. Now this provision applies to individuals who were eligible to receive an SBA loan but did not take out a loan. What does this mean?

According to the SBA, 100,000 homeowners were eligible to apply for an SBA loan from the March and August 2016 floods; 38,000 applications were received, and 18,000 were approved.

As I am told, if you are eligible but don't take out the loan, you don't qualify for the Restore Louisiana grant. Again, I am told that if you are eligible but did not take the loan from the SBA, then you are not eligible then to receive the Restore Louisiana grant because of the duplication of benefits rule. There are roughly 82,000 homeowners who could potentially be eligible to receive relief from repealing or altering this duplication of benefits rule.

Now, there is some confusion in my State. I want to be clear. This does apply to the \$2 billion CDBG grants the Louisiana delegation secured to help families recover from the 2016 floods in Louisiana.

Senator KENNEDY and I also helped secure additional Army Corps resources to fully fund the Comite River

Diversion, a diversion that takes floodwaters from the Comite River into the Mississippi and would have helped prevent many homes from being flooded—probably the homes these folks are being evacuated from—in the great flood of 2016.

We also secured \$12 billion in mitigation grants specifically for Louisiana and about five other States, which is much more targeted for disaster States than the House bill. Again, the Senate bill is the same number of dollars but for fewer States, therefore, more targeted than in the House bill.

So the disaster relief portion of this legislation has taken some steps in the right direction. However, we still need additional clarification around duplication of benefits issues and legacy FEMA appeals matters.

I thank my Senate colleague from Louisiana for his work on this and hope to receive further commitments from the Appropriations Committee to continue to work on these important disaster recovery issues.

I yield the floor.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I urge the Senate to approve the Further Extension of Continuing Appropriations Act, 2018.

This legislation is more than a continuing resolution to sustain government operations at current levels through March 23.

It incorporates a 2-year agreement setting defense and nondefense spending levels for fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the product of bipartisan and bicameral negotiations. This overdue agreement is necessary for Congress to meet its responsibility to provide appropriations to meet national security and other important needs around the country.

This deal gives my committee a real opportunity to complete the fiscal year 2018 appropriations process with significant funding to begin rebuilding our military and address national priorities like veterans, infrastructure, and the opioid epidemic.

This measure also provides necessary emergency funding to help victims of recent hurricanes, wildfires, and other disasters to rebuild their lives and communities.

I appreciate the many hours of negotiations that have gone into this legislation. The cotton and dairy provisions are the outcome of months of joint efforts with my friend, Vice Chairman LEAHY, to help cotton and dairy producers overcome economic hardships that threaten their livelihoods.

I hope we continue in this cooperative and bipartisan fashion as we undertake the challenging work of crafting responsible legislation to finish the 2018 appropriations cycle and begin work on next year's bills.

Mr. CASSIDY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, here we are at a quarter to 6. Funding for the government expires in just a few hours. A bipartisan agreement before us funds our troops at the level requested by the Pentagon. It addresses the opioid crisis, which is extremely big in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and around the country. It funds our veterans and many other shared priorities. The Speaker of the House supports the bill. He is waiting for it to pass the Senate. The President of the United States supports the bill and is waiting to sign it into law.

I understand my friend and colleague from Kentucky does not join with the President in supporting the bill. It is his right, of course, to vote against the bill, but I would argue that it is time to vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I very much appreciate my good friend, the junior Senator from Kentucky, for his fidelity to spending—something we don't agree with—and for his fidelity of trying to get his amendments on the floor and debated—something we do agree with. I recently supported that right when the FISA bill came up, which I know was very important to him.

The difficulty we have here is that the government will shut down. We still have the House that has to vote. Frankly, there are lots of amendments on my side, and it is hard to make an argument that if one person gets an amendment that everybody else will not want an amendment, and then we will be here for a very long time.

So I would plead with my colleague, given the exigencies, that maybe a budget point of order might work, which would make the same point; that is, he believes the spending is too high. Then we could move forward and get a bill done and not risk a government shutdown. We are in risky territory here as both of my friends from Kentucky know. If that would accomplish the same thing and not hold us up here, we could let the House do its will and then, maybe, get the bill to the President, because we want to move things forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I propose that we give the Senator from Kentucky an opportunity to make a budget point of order, which would give him a vote on the substance of the matter he is concerned about.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 6 p.m. today, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a

further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and Senator PAUL be recognized to make a budget point of order; that the majority leader or his designee be recognized to make a motion to waive; and that following the disposition of the motion to waive, the Senate vote on the motion to concur with further amendment with no other intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I ran for office because I was very critical of President Obama's trillion-dollar deficits. Now we have Republicans, hand in hand with Democrats, who are offering us trillion-dollar deficits. I cannot, in all good honesty and all good faith, just look the other way because my party is now complicit in the deficits. But, really, who is to blame? Both parties.

We have a 700-page bill that no one has read and that was printed at midnight. No one will read this bill. Nothing will be reformed. The waste will continue, and government will keep taking your money irresponsibly and adding to the \$20 trillion debt.

There are no amendments being allowed. This is the most important debate we will have in the year over spending, and no amendments are allowed. We should have a full amendment process. We have been open for business for 10 hours today. You can do four amendments an hour. We could have done 40 amendments. So it is a canard to say that we cannot have one amendment and cannot spend 15 minutes debating whether or not it is good for the country to add \$1 trillion of debt.

Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, the Senate will vote today on a bill that will add \$1.5 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years. This is a large amount of money and something that we should be very wary of. This is in addition to what we were already running a debt of, that of nearly \$1 trillion. So we are adding a couple hundred extra billion dollars a year to a budget and a country and a Congress that had already recklessly let spending get out of control.

The bill is nearly 700 pages. It was given to us at midnight last night, and I would venture to say that no one has read the bill. No one can thoroughly digest a 700-page bill overnight, and I do think that it does things that we really, really ought to talk about and how we should pay for them.

One of the things this bill does is add \$500 billion in spending over a 2-year period. This bill increases spending 21 percent. Does that sound like a large amount? Is anybody at home getting a bonus or an increase in his paycheck of 21 percent? Yet your government is

going to spend 21 percent more without really having a full debate and without having amendments.

The exchange you just watched was my asking to have a 15-minute vote. I have been asking all day for it. I have been asking all week for it. We could have, literally, had dozens of votes today, but we squabble because people don't want to be put on the spot.

The reason I am here tonight is to put people on the spot. I want people to feel uncomfortable. I want them to have to answer people at home who ask: How come you were against President Obama's deficits, and then how come you are for Republican deficits? Isn't that the very definition of intellectual dishonesty? If you were against President Obama's deficits and now you are for the Republican deficits, isn't that the very definition of hypocrisy? People need to be made aware. Your Senators need to answer the people from home, and they need to answer for this debate. We should have a full-throated debate.

My amendment says simply this: We should obey the budget caps.

What are budget caps? These are limits we placed on spending for both military and nonmilitary. We placed them in 2011, and guess what. For 1 or 2 years, the government actually shrunk, but now the government is taking off, and this new stimulus of deficit spending will be as big as President Obama's stimulus. Don't you remember when Republicans howled to high heaven that President Obama was spending us into the gutter, spending us into oblivion? Now the Republicans are doing the same thing.

So I ask the question: Whose fault is it? The Republicans'? Yes. Whose fault is it? The Democrats'? Yes. It is the fault of both parties.

You realize that this is the secret of Washington. The dirty little secret is that the Republicans are loudly clamoring for more military spending, but they cannot get it unless they give the Democrats welfare spending, so they raise all of the spending. It is a compromise in the wrong direction. We should be compromising in the direction of going toward spending only what comes in. Yet this goes on and on and on.

You will hear people say: Well, the military is hollowed out. We have not enough money for our military. Yet we have doubled the amount of money we have spent on the military since 9/11 of 2001.

Look, I have family members in the military, and I have retired members of the military in my family, and I care very deeply about our soldiers. In fact, do you know what I would do? I would bring them all home from Afghanistan. The war is won. People are talking about having a parade. Declare victory in Afghanistan; bring them home; have a parade; and give them all a raise. Yet we go on and on and on, finding new wars to fight that make no sense, where we have no idea who the good

guys are and who the bad guys are. The wars are so murky that halfway through the war we sometimes change sides or the people we support change sides.

We are at war in Afghanistan after 16 years. It costs \$50 billion a year. So they need more money for the military because we are in too many places for too long. We have no exact mission of why we are there, but it is not a militarily winnable situation in Afghanistan. There will never be a victory in Afghanistan. There may be a negotiated settlement, and they may flee when we come, but as soon as we leave, they come back. Are we to be there forever?

For the umpteenth time, Congress is going to exceed its budget caps. We had something passed back in 2010 that was called the PAYGO Act. It was supposed to say: If you are going to pay new money, you have to go find an offset somewhere else. You can only pay as you go. It was sort of like a family would think about it. If you spend some more money, you have to raise your income or you have to save some money.

Do you know how many times we have evaded the issue since 2010? Thirty-some-odd times. When I try to get them to pay attention to their own rules, three or four people will vote to pay attention to the rules.

We are in a terrible state, and \$20 trillion in debt is bigger than our entire economy.

Do you wonder why the stock market is jittery? One of the reasons is that we do not have the capacity to continue to fund the government like this. We have been funding it with phony interest rates that are concocted and given to us by the Federal Reserve, but they aren't real.

What if interest rates become real again?

Does anybody remember when interest rates were 5, 10, or 15 percent? I remember them as a teenager being 19 or 20 percent. But historically, they have often been at least 5 percent. Do you know what happens to the Government when the interest rates go to 5 and they have to borrow for Social Security and Medicare and all the other stuff we have to do? There will be a catastrophe in this country.

Already the rates are ticking up. The stock market is jittery. If you ask the question why, maybe it has something to do with the irresponsibility of Congress spending money that we don't have.

So the bill's going to exceed the budget caps by \$296 billion. That is not counting the money they don't count. So these people are really, really clever. Imagine them running their fingers together and saying: How can we hide stuff from the American people? How can we evade the spending caps so we can be even more irresponsible than we appear? So \$296 billion is the official number. That is about \$300 billion over 2 years that will be in excess of the budget caps.

But there is another \$160 billion that is stuck into something called an overseas contingency fund. The budget caps don't apply there. So we are \$300 billion for 2 years over the budget caps, and then another \$160 billion over the caps that they just don't count. They act as if it doesn't matter: We are just not going to count it.

Then we come to catastrophes. You might say to yourself: Well, I have great sympathy for the people's houses who were flooded in Texas and Florida. I do. My sister's house was flooded near Houston. So I have great compassion. But even for my family, I can't take the money from you and borrow it from the next generation and say: Here is a pot of money. Go rebuild your house.

We should do it in a responsible fashion. We have already spent \$30-some-odd billion on emergency relief for the hurricanes. There is another \$90 billion.

Do you know what I have said? Instead of just plunking \$90 billion down or, actually, printing it over at the Federal Reserve or borrowing it—instead of just doing that—why don't we take the \$90 billion from somewhere in the budget that it shouldn't be?

People come to me all the time and say they want something from the Government, and I say: Well, if you want something from Government, tell me where to take it from, because I am not going to borrow any more.

Where do you get the \$90 billion from? I have some suggestions. Do you know how many votes they get? About 10 or 15 people vote with me.

Let's not send it to Pakistan this year. They burn our flag. They put Christians in jail. They put in jail Dr. Afridi, the guy who helped us to find bin Laden. We finally got bin Laden, who had been living high on the hog a mile or two from a military academy. Everybody in the Pakistani Government probably knew he was there, and he lived uninterrupted. We finally got him when Dr. Shakil Afridi gave us information.

Do you know what Pakistan did to this doctor? He is in jail.

Do you know what they did with a Christian by the name of Asia Bibi? Pakistan has her on death row. She went to the well in a small village to draw water. As she was drawing water, the women in the village began stoning her and beating her with sticks. As she lay on the ground bleeding, everybody watched and gawked. She was crying out for help, and the police finally arrived, and she thought she had been saved—only to be arrested for being a Christian.

Yet we have given \$33 billion to Pakistan over the last decade—good money after bad. Almost everybody up here loves it. They just want more of your money to go to Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China—you name it. They will send your money anywhere, and we have a country that needs it here.

Instead of nation-building abroad, why don't we build our country here at

home? Why don't we do some nation-building here at home?

We have \$90 billion that we need for emergency relief. Even as conservative as I am, I would say that we could probably find that. We are a great, rich country. We could probably rebuild, and the government can be a part of that. But you know what; why don't we quit sending it to Pakistan? Why don't we quit sending it to countries that burn our flag and chant "Death to America"? Why don't we keep that money at home? Why don't we say to the government, writ large, that they have to spend a little bit less?

Does anybody ever have less money this year than they had last year? Has anybody had a 1-percent pay cut? You deal with it.

That is what government needs—a 1-percent pay cut. If you take a 1-percent pay cut across the board, you have more than enough money to actually pay for the disaster relief, but nobody is going to do that because they are fiscally irresponsible.

Who are they? Republicans. Who are they? Democrats. Who are they? Virtually the whole body is careless and reckless with your money.

So the money will not be offset by cuts anywhere. The money will be added to the debt, and there will be a day of reckoning.

What is the day of reckoning? The day of reckoning may well be the collapse of the stock market. The day of reckoning may be the collapse of the dollar.

When it comes I can't tell you exactly, but I can tell you that it has happened repeatedly in history when countries ruin their currency, when countries become profligate spenders, when countries begin to believe that debt does not matter.

That is what this bill is about. But here is the confusion. Some at home would say: We just want them to cooperate. If they would just hold hands and sing "Kumbaya," everything would be fine.

Guess what. That is what you have.

You saw the leadership of both sides opposing me because they are now clasped hand in hand. Everybody is getting what they want. Everybody is getting more spending. The military, the right is getting more military spending, and the left is getting more welfare spending, and you are getting stuck with the bill—not even technically you. It is the next generation that is being stuck with the bill. Your grandkids are being stuck with the bill.

But mark my words: The stock market is jittery. The bond market is jittery. There is an undercurrent of unease amidst this euphoria you have seen in the stock market. A country cannot go on forever spending money this way, and what you are seeing is recklessness trying to be passed off as bipartisanship.

So we have gotten together. They are all holding hands, and there is only one bad guy standing in the way. One guy

is going to keep us here until 3 in the morning.

You know what? I think the country is worth a debate until 3 in the morning, frankly. I think it is worth a debate on whether or not we should borrow \$1 million a minute. I have been saying that for a few years: We borrow \$1 million a minute. I think that really brings it home. When we were talking about it with my staff today, they said: You know, it is almost \$2 million a minute now—\$2 million a minute.

Can you imagine that? This is exploding. This deficit is exploding. There isn't the alarm you should see.

Guess what. Every one of these people, you will see them come home to your State. You will see them come home, and they will tell you how earnest they are and how the deficit is bad, and Big Government spending is bad and we have to reduce waste.

It is dishonest. They are not doing anything about the waste. The waste has been out there for probably a half-century or more. Nothing has been done in the last 40 years for one precise reason: There is no oversight.

Do you realize that what they are passing is all of the money glommed together in one bill? No one will read the bill. No one knows what is in it. And there is no reform in the bill. That I can say with absolute certitude. No one will read it. There is no reform, and nothing gets better. The debt will grow.

When the Democrats are in power, Republicans appear to be the conservative party, but when Republicans are in power, it seems that there is no conservative party. You see, opposition seems to bring people together, and they know what they are not for. But, then, they get in power, and they decide: Hmm, we are just going to spend that money too. We are going to send that money to our friends this time.

The hypocrisy hangs in the air and chokes anyone with a sense of decency or intellectual honesty.

The right cries out: Our military is hollowed out—even though military spending has more than doubled since 2001.

The left is no better. Democrats don't oppose the military money as long as they can get some for themselves—as long as they can get some for their pet causes. The dirty little secret is that, by and large, both parties don't care about the debt.

The spending bill is 700 pages, and there will be no amendments. The debate, although it is somewhat inside baseball, is over my having a 15-minute debate, and they say: Woe is me; if you get one, everybody will want an amendment.

That would be called debate. That would be called an open process. That would be called concern for your country—enough to take a few minutes. They are like: But it is Thursday, and we like to be on vacation on Fridays.

So they clamor, but we have been sitting around all day. It is not like we

have had 100 amendments today and we are all worn out and we can't do one more. We are going to have zero amendments—zero, goose egg, no amendments.

So it is a binary choice. They love that word. It is a binary choice; take it or leave it.

You know what. I am going to leave it. I didn't come up here for this. I didn't leave my family throughout the week and travel up here to be a part of something that is so much inertia and so much status quo that they are not leading the country. They are just following along, and it is a big ball rolling down the hill, grabbing up your dollars as the boulder rolls down the hill, and it is going to crush us. But nobody has got the guts to stand up and say no.

Over the past 40 years, only 4 times have we actually done 12 individual department-of-government appropriations bills.

Have you heard of the Appropriations Committee? This is where the spending is. You have the Department of Defense, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Health and Human Services. We are supposed to pass each individual bill. What would happen when we pass the bills is that they would go through committee and each committee would look and see: Well, this spending seems to be working. We are getting a great result, and we want some more next year. This spending appears to have been put in a closet and lit on fire. So next year we are not giving that to the person who put the \$10 million in the closet and lit it on fire. We are not going to give them any more money.

But guess what. That doesn't happen. So people keep putting your money in the closet and lighting it on fire.

You heard about FEMA, this emergency organization. You have heard about people without food. So there were 350 million meals they needed, I believe, for Puerto Rico—350 million meals. Do you know who got the contract? A person who had no employees.

Now, raise your hand—you are not allowed to, actually; but let's say, raise your hand in a figurative way—if you think it is a good idea to give a contract for 350 million meals to someone who has no employees and who is not already in this business. They just know how to fill out the forms in the Federal Government to trick us into giving them the contract.

They were woefully short, and there are still people waiting in line for meals. It is not compassion or no compassion. It is idiocy versus more idiocy. We gave the money to someone who doesn't even do this—350 million meals.

Over the past 40 years, 4 times have we actually done the right thing—passed 12 individual appropriations bills, bundled them together, had a budget, and done the right thing. There is no guarantee that everybody will be wise in their spending, but it has to be better. It can't be worse.

What do we do instead? It is called a continuing resolution. We glom all the

bills together in one bill, like we have done tonight—Republicans and Democrats clasping hands—and nobody is going to look at it. Nobody is going to reform the spending. As a consequence, wasteful spending is riddled throughout your government. Only four times in 40 years have we done the appropriations process the way we are supposed to.

Recently, they did a Pentagon study—the beginning of an audit—and they audited part of the Pentagon. This partial audit showed that \$800 million was misplaced or lost—just \$800 million. I don't think they actually put it in the closet and burned it, but they can't find it.

A while back they looked at some of the military expenditures, and they had \$29 billion worth of stuff they couldn't find. Overall, the audit found that over \$100 billion in waste was found at the Pentagon—\$100 billion. Well, their budget is like \$700 billion. So we are talking about a significant portion, over a 10-percent problem with figuring out our waste. It doesn't get any better because we don't vote on all these things individually, and we don't parse out the difference.

I will give you another example. In the Department of Defense—last year we found this out—spent \$45 million on a natural gas station in Afghanistan—\$45 million. It was projected to cost \$500,000—86-some-odd cost overruns to \$45 million.

So you are scratching your head and saying: Natural gas station, what is that? We don't have one in my town.

We don't have any in my town, either. They didn't have any in Afghanistan, but do you know what? They decided they needed to reduce the carbon footprint of Afghanistan. They would reduce the carbon footprint of Afghanistan. I thought the military's job was to kill the enemy. So is the military's job now to reduce their carbon footprint?

So they bought a \$45 million gas station that served up natural gas, and guess what they discovered. They kept waiting. There was a guy sitting next to the pump. He was sitting on a stool, and he was waiting for customers. No one ever came.

Someone said: Oh, my goodness, they don't have any cars that run on natural gas.

That would probably be the same if you came to my town in Kentucky. Almost no one has a natural gas car in America. They live in a primitive state in Afghanistan, and you are expecting them to have natural gas cars?

So they said: Well, gosh, we already built this \$45 million gas station, maybe we should buy them some cars. So they bought them some cars with your money. They paid for the gas station with your money, and now they bought them some cars with your money, but then the people still wouldn't come in because they said: We don't have any money.

They said: OK. Well, we got the gas station, and we have gotten you cars.

You need a credit card, so we gave them credit cards. So they have a U.S. credit card that you pay for, to take their natural gas car that you paid for, to go to a natural gas station because we are reducing the carbon footprint in Afghanistan. When did that become the job of the military? Why does that go on year after year after year, the waste?

(Mr. KENNEDY assumed the Chair.)

For 17 years, we have been trying to get the Pentagon to be audited. Do you know what their response has been? We are too big to be audited. How is that for your government? Your government is telling you they are too big to be audited and that scrutiny is just not your business.

Is it any wonder, really, that our debt is a \$20 trillion debt? Fifty years ago, William Proxmire was a Senator. He was a Democratic Senator—a conservative Democrat, in some ways. He began handing out something called the Golden Fleece Award, and we will talk about a few of them.

This is 50 years ago. The reason I want to point this out is, as you look at this and listen, you will find that some of the stuff we are doing today is just as bad as 50 years ago. Some of it is the same agencies. So you scratch your head and you ask: Fifty years? We have been through a couple of generations of politicians, and they are still not learning anything from finding this waste? Some of it is the budget process—the process that we pass these enormous bills that no one reads, that no one scrutinizes, and that do not reform the spending.

William Proxmire used to do his Golden Fleece Award, and I remember this as a kid in the early seventies. Here are a couple of things he pointed out, and this is sort of some of his best.

The National Science Foundation spent \$84,000 trying to find out why people fall in love. Now, there is something that sounds like a really worthwhile science project with a real specific answer. I think the conclusion was, they are not exactly sure.

The National Science Foundation, which you will see is a recurring theme in bad and wasteful spending, also spent about \$500,000 to try to determine why rats, monkeys, and humans bite and why they clench their jaws. Well, now, you could say that is really important. Maybe we will discover something from that or you could say, when we are running a deficit, and we are borrowing the money, maybe some of these things, it may not be the most worthwhile to borrow the money for them.

This is a good one. This is from the early seventies. The Federal Aviation Administration spent \$57,000 studying the body measurements of what they called in those days airline stewardesses. These were trainees, and it was for the purpose of purchasing their safety equipment. Someone got \$50,000 to measure the body measurements of airline stewardesses.

The Administrator of the Federal Energy Administration—this is still from William Proxmire 50 years ago—spent millions of dollars to find out if drunk fish are more aggressive than sober fish. I am not going to tell you the answer. I am going to let you ponder that one. Do you think drunk fish are more aggressive than sober fish?

This is your government, this is your money, and this is the debt you are handing down to your kids and grandkids—and this was 50 years ago. So now we will get into some of the things we have been doing more recently.

We do a waste report where we point out some of these things, and every week we have a new one. I will say, if you want to look at your waste report, we have that, I believe, on our Facebook and on our website.

This is one of my favorites. Do you remember when Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon? He said: “[O]ne small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” Some people think he said: “One small step for a man, one giant leap. . . .” So there has been some very heated discussion over whether he said “one step for man” or “one step for a man”—the preposition “a.” Did he or did he not use the preposition “a”?

So your government, in their infinite wisdom, took \$700,000, which, by the way, was supposed to go to autism research, and they decided to study Neil Armstrong’s statement. So somebody at some university decided to play the tape over and over to see what he said, and \$700,000 later, they couldn’t decide. You know, inquiring minds want to know, but we still don’t know. Did he say “a man” or did he say “man”?

This is the same kind of stuff you were seeing with William Proxmire 50 years ago, but this is last year. I think it is the same group—the National Science Foundation. I think I am probably going to get some hate mail from them.

This is \$850,000, and we call this one the Game of Waste. You think, when we are spending money in Afghanistan, well, surely it is to kill the enemy. Sometimes it is building bridges, and sometimes it is building roads—stuff we don’t do in our country anymore. This one was \$850,000 for the development of a televised cricket league. Since self-esteem is important, we want the Afghans to feel good about themselves, and we want them to be able to watch the national sport on TV. So we spent \$850,000 to get it televised, but the only thing we didn’t reckon is, it was kind of like the natural gas car—they didn’t have TVs. I don’t know if we are in the process now of buying them TVs, but we did spend \$850,000 of your money to get a televised cricket league for those people in Afghanistan.

This is a good one. Everybody likes to take a selfie, right? If you don’t do them, your kids will do them, your grandkids will do them. This was a study of \$500,000 to see if taking selfies

makes you happy. Whether you are smiling or you are frowning and you look at yourself in the picture, does it make you happy? Now, inquiring minds want to know. If you want to study that, good for you. Go get somebody to voluntarily give you some money to study that. All right? I really would like to watch you going around the neighborhood knocking on doors asking for money to study whether selfies make you happy.

This stuff has been going on for 40 years. Why don’t we root this out and stop it? Well, one, they will come to you all high and mighty, and they will say: But, sir, it is science, and you are just a layperson and don’t understand how important selfies could be, and you aren’t qualified to talk about selfies because you don’t know about happiness. We have experts in happiness that can tell that we could make the world happy again. We could all be happy if we had more selfies. So it goes on. They give us this scientific mumbo jumbo that somehow we are not smart enough to have common sense enough to know what we should be spending money on, but this goes on decade after decade.

School lunch program. You might say: Well, we need to help those who can’t buy a school lunch, so we have a school lunch program, except for what we discovered was \$158 million of Federal money was given to the Los Angeles School District, and it turns out they were buying things other than lunches because nobody was watching them. Nobody was auditing the program. Nobody was doing the individual appropriations bills. They were passing—clasp hands together—continuing resolutions, where nobody looks at it: 700 pages and nobody reads it. When nobody reads it, they buy sprinklers and buy things for themselves like new televisions for the faculty to watch. It is \$158 million that was not spent on school lunches but was wasted and spent on other items.

Everybody has heard about climate change. There are some undertones and overtones of politics in climate change. In case you haven’t heard of climate change, the people who want you to hear about climate change want to spend some of your money to make sure you are listening to them about climate change, so they spent \$450,000 on a video game. This is also the National Science Foundation. So a whole new generation will be able to play this video game on climate change, complete with great graphics. We have this game that your kids can play on climate change. It is just one thing after another.

All right. You may have been on this one if you are in Washington. This one we call a Streetcar Named Waste. There is a streetcar over here a few blocks on H Street, and they spent \$1.6 million on it. I think they had already spent more on it before that, but they spent an additional—it goes a mile. It goes from nowhere to nowhere. You get

on, and there is nobody on it, and it just cost a fortune. You could walk from one end to the other in about the same time it takes you to go on the subway or on this tramway.

You have to ask yourself, when you see this government spending, would you give money to this? I ask this question often when I am home. I ask people: If you had \$100 you were going to give because you wanted to help people, would you give it to the Salvation Army or the Federal Government that spends \$1.6 million on a streetcar that goes from nowhere to nowhere and no one rides?

So I talked about whether we should be spending the money somewhere else or here. This is \$250,000 that was spent on bringing 24 kids from Pakistan to Space Camp and to Dollywood. You can say: Well, that is good relations. Now we are going to have good relations with Pakistan. They are no longer going to kill Christians and put them in jail or burn our flag—maybe. I am not against interaction. In fact, if this were some kind of privately funded group that wanted to have some money to have interaction between us and Pakistan, I would probably be all for it. First, the pricetag is a little scary to me—\$250,000 for 24 kids. I represent a lot of people in Kentucky who don’t have the money to drive down to Huntsville and go to Space Camp with their kids, so really should we not sort of readjust our priorities and start thinking, do we need to take care of ours at home here before we start shipping our money overseas or do we really need to think about can we afford to just keep borrowing money for projects like this?

This is the Department of Defense, and this I think we referred to earlier. This was \$29 million worth of heavy equipment that they lost—can’t find it in Afghanistan. It is even worse than that. See, they lost that, but we also made the decision, as we were downgrading the war in Afghanistan after the last surge we did in Afghanistan, that we didn’t want the other side to have our stuff so we blew up a lot of our own stuff. We blew up billions of dollars’ worth of humvees, tanks, you name it. When they were looking and counting it up, they found \$29 million worth that they couldn’t find. If you really think about it, and you are thinking, how could we have more money for both our national defense, and how could we have more money for infrastructure—you hear people talk about infrastructure. People want to build roads. Republicans and Democrats want to build roads, but guess what. There is no money. We are a trillion dollars short this year because we passed these—clasp hands—spend whatever the hell you can find, whatever is not tied down, spend it and give it away. Both sides spend it like there is no tomorrow.

If you ask: How could we change our government? Where would there be some money that we could actually

save? Well, really, some of it is in our foreign policy. We do not have enough probably for our military to be involved in seven wars. We might have enough to be involved in maybe three or two or one or maybe we should not be involved in any of the ones we are involved in at this point.

The thing is, we said after 9/11 that we are going to go after those who attacked us, those who aided the attackers and those who abetted them or supported them. They are all dead. We killed them all. That is good. We should declare victory and come home from Afghanistan.

Right now, we are over there nation-building. Why do we have trouble with nation-building? I will give you a story from a Navy SEAL I met a couple of years ago. He had been in 19 years. He was a tough guy, like they all are, and he said: Do you know what? We can go anywhere. We can kill any of our enemies. We can do whatever you ask us to do, but, he said, the mistake is when the politicians tell us to plant the flag and create a country. We are just not very good at it.

Most of our military don't want to be policemen. They don't want to create countries. They would just as soon kill the enemy and come back home to their family, but we kill the enemy, and then we stay and we stay and we stay, and we build them schools, we build them roads. There are some schools that have been built four or five times and blown up four or five times by the Taliban. It is terrible that the Taliban doesn't want girls to go to school. It is terrible that the Taliban would do this, but don't the people who live there have some responsibility, after we have given them a trillion dollars, to do something for themselves? Will people do something for themselves if you keep doing it for them? So really there has to come a time when we come home. We spend \$50 billion a year in Afghanistan. Our mission is over, and we should come home.

It is \$50 billion a year that could be spent on infrastructure, if you wanted to do that, or in maybe not having a trillion-dollar debt next year or deficit next year.

We are in a bunch of different places though. When the soldiers were killed in Niger not too long ago, a country in Africa, many people didn't even know where the country was, much less that we had 800 troops there. You say: Well, it is only 800; it is not that many. Well, the problem is, 800 sometimes becomes 8,000, and it sometimes then becomes 80,000 because when we get in the middle of a civil war and some of our guys get killed, we are like, well, gosh, we have to do more, not less. Nobody wants to come home after people have been killed. They want to go in and punish the enemy. I don't know who the good people are in Niger or who the bad people are and what they are fighting about. So I think sometimes it is very unclear who the good guys and bad guys are.

We have been involved in the Syrian civil war for a long time, and we aided a group of people who many up here call the moderate Syrian rebels. Well, it turns out the moderate Syrian rebels were jihadists often. They hated Israel. The only people they hated about as much as Israel was us. We gave anti-tank weapons to one group, and the leader of the group, within a week of getting our anti-tank weapons, said—we wanted them to fight ISIS—they said: The hell with ISIS. We want to attack Assad. When we are done with Assad, we want to attack Israel and get the Golan Heights back.

These are the people we gave weapons to. We poured hundreds of tons of weapons in there. There are a lot of weapons running through Qatar, running through the United Arab Emirates, running through Saudi Arabia—we just poured it in there. A lot of them wound up in the wrong hands. We kept supporting these moderate fighters who didn't fight. We spent \$250 million training 10 of them. We trained 10 fighters for \$250 million. We sent them into battle, and they were captured in the first 30 minutes.

Guess what happened recently. I will give President Trump some credit for this. They decided to ally with whoever was fighting the best over there. It turned out the Kurds were, both the Syrian Kurds and the Kurds who live in Iraq, and they did fight. Now the question is—Turkey is unhappy with that, so we will throw the Kurds under the bus in favor of Turkey, which has a leader who has no use for us at this point either. It is very confusing who the enemy is and who our friends are. It is also very expensive. We have to defend ourselves, and we may occasionally have to attack the enemy overseas.

The thing is, if we go and stay for decade after decade—in Iraq, we didn't stay long enough. How long is long enough? Is it 100 years, 200 years—forever? They don't see us as we said they were going to treat us—as liberators. They see us as occupiers.

Afghanistan has hated every country that has come in there. They didn't like the Russians occupying them. They didn't like the British occupying them. They don't like us there.

There was a movie not too long ago with a depiction in a scene where they were in a village and freed the village. The general was telling them: You are free. You are free. The elders of the village gathered and said: Will you leave now?

They realized that wasn't the end. Eventually, the Americans would leave, and when they left, the Taliban would come back.

We have to rethink: Are we going to be at war forever? Can we afford it?

Maybe we have to think about whether or not we should do nation building here at home and not always abroad. We have to think about the unintended consequences of what we do as well. I will give you an example of

that. We recently signed a deal to give Saudi Arabia \$350 billion worth of military equipment. Currently, Saudi Arabia is using that equipment to encircle and blockade Yemen, the country next to them. Yemen is a very poor country. They import about 80 percent of their food. This is one of the poorest countries on the planet, and currently 17 million people live on the edge of starvation. But people convinced themselves that, well, there are some Shia who are supported by Iran, and we don't want Iran there, so we have to support the Sunnis.

Does anyone remember who attacked us on 9/11? It wasn't the Shia; it was the Sunnis. Most of the radical jihadists, the ones who have been trying to get into our country—in fact, I don't know of any Shia terrorists who have been here, to tell you the truth. We have had plenty of Sunni terrorists. All 16 of the hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. We just released documents last year, the missing pages of the Saudi Arabia investigation with the 9/11 Commission, which show there is a possibility they were complicit in those things. They are not exactly a free country. They are a monarchy that could actually have power to consume and concentrate, in one person's hands, more and more.

We have to decide what wars we need to be involved in. Our Founders were very clear about this. Our Founders didn't like war, by the way. Our Founders had seen virtually perpetual war in Europe. Everybody was always fighting somebody, and it went on even after founding our country—cousins fighting cousins, fathers fighting brothers, brothers fighting brothers; everybody was related. All the royal families of Europe were related and always fighting with each other. They didn't do the fighting. They sent the common man to do the fighting.

So when we got to our country, we said: We have these oceans; enough of that. We want less war. One of the things they included in the Constitution was a very specific provision that said: When we go to war, we have to declare war. It has to be passed by Congress.

There was a debate over whether that power should be in Congress or should be in the hands of the President. Madison said that the executive, the President, is the branch most prone to war; therefore, with steady care, we gave that power to the legislature. War is supposed to be determined by us—ultimately, by us as representatives of you.

It doesn't happen that way. It hasn't happened that way in a long time. Why are we at war in seven different places? We don't vote on it. We haven't voted on anything, really, since the proclamation of the Iraq war, which I think was a mistake, but we at least voted on it in 2002.

We voted in 2001 to go into Afghanistan for those who attacked us. We haven't voted on anything since. They

said that the 2001 proclamation gives us the power to go anywhere. Most people fighting weren't even born and have nothing to do with 9/11 or Afghanistan. Yet we are in a perpetual war, and we haven't voted on it.

Once again, it is the process that is broken, like the budget. We have extraordinary waste, and your money gets burned and put in a closet and thrown down a waste hole. We don't do the right process of following your money.

War is somewhat the same way. We get involved in war in too many places because we don't have a vigorous debate.

When we go to war, I tell people that should be the most important decision we ever make—the most important decision a legislator ever makes. It should be a profound, moral, and personal decision, as if your kids were going or as if you were going. It should be a heartfelt debate, and everybody should speak out, and we should try to figure out whether it is right to go to war.

Interestingly, when we have been attacked, we have been nearly unanimous. When we were attacked at Pearl Harbor, they voted. One person opposed it, and everybody else voted for it. When we were attacked on 9/11, it was the same thing. I would have voted for that response. We should have responded. That was the right thing. We voted and did the right thing.

Since then, we are now at war everywhere, in countries most of us haven't heard of, fighting on one side or the other, and we don't even know what we are fighting for. It costs an extraordinary amount of money, but we are not voting on it. Maybe if we did the right thing—maybe if we passed the appropriations bills, maybe if we voted on war—we wouldn't be in so many places. They are all interconnected because they are intersected to the shortness we have in money.

The last thing I will get to is something called the debt ceiling. The debt ceiling is something that has been a limitation on how much we spend, and we have to vote on it. It is an unpleasant vote. They try to do it for a long period of time or try to stretch it beyond elections. So this 700-page bill, which no one read, which will continue all spending and will not reform your government and is irresponsible, and which we will pass later tonight—that 700-page bill also allows the debt ceiling to go up. Historically, we would let the debt ceiling—our borrowing limit—go up a dollar amount. We would say: We have to borrow money, and it looks as if we will need a trillion dollars. Do you know how they do it now? Like everything else, we break the rules, and somehow there is a little bit of deviancy to it. The debt ceiling will go up in an unspecified amount. As much as you can borrow between now and November, go for it. So there is no limitation; the debt ceiling becomes not a limitation at all. They are still taking

the vote—although maybe they don't want to vote on it anymore; they want it just to happen.

They say: Well, you voted for the spending. I personally think the more obstacles we have in place to spending money we don't have, the better we would be.

The debt ceiling will go up in an unspecified amount that will be a credit card that has no limits, issued to the United States. This is a problem. Everything about this process stinks, to tell you the truth.

The media doesn't get it. The media does you such a disservice. They can't understand what is going on sometimes. They say: Bipartisanship has broken out. Hallelujah. Republicans and Democrats are getting along.

In reality, they should be telling you: Look for your wallet. Check your pants to make sure they haven't taken your wallet.

When both parties are happy and both parties are getting together and doing stuff, guess what. They are usually looting the Treasury. That is what this bill does. It is going to loot the Treasury. It spends money we don't have. We will have a trillion-dollar deficit this year.

What I would say to my Republican colleagues—you don't see them here; I am not sure where they are. What I would say to my Republican colleagues is: I know every one of you. I have seen your speeches. I saw every one of you go after President Obama. Was that all empty partisanship? Do you not really believe it? I promise you, every one of them went home—and probably will go home next week and say how they are fiscally conservative and against the debt, and almost all will vote for this new debt. Almost all will vote for a trillion-dollar debt in 1 year, and every Republican, at least, was against President Obama's debt.

At least the Democrats are honest. They are not too concerned about the debt. They are sometimes concerned about the debt when it comes to taxes because they don't want people to keep more of their own money. They are afraid somehow of the imbalance of that.

The thing is, we do have to watch the balance of money—how much comes in and goes out. Some have said: How can you be a deficit hawk if you voted for the tax cut? One, because I think you own your labor. You own the fruits of your labor. You own all of it. You give up some of your labor to live in a civilized world. My question to you is—everything you make, everything you own, everything that comes from the sweat of your brow and work of your hands is yours. If you give up some, you are giving up your liberty. You give up a little bit of your liberty, you give up a little bit of your wages to live in a civilized world, to have law and order and have some government. I am OK with that.

I ask you: Do you want to give up more or less? Do you want to give up

100 percent of your paycheck or give up 10 percent of your paycheck?

We should always be about minimizing government. Taxes really are about how much of your liberty you get to keep—how much of your liberty to continue spending your own money.

The other side of the ledger is spending. Are we going to have some government spending? Yes. The Constitution laid out very specific requirements for what was allowed. Article I, section 8 says what Congress can do. They are very few and limited. Yet what happened over time is that we began doing a lot of things that aren't there.

What they said in the Bill of Rights was pretty important, though, in the Ninth and Tenth Amendment. The Ninth Amendment says that those rights not listed are still yours and not to be disparaged. So the Bill of Rights was not a complete listing of your rights. You have many other rights—such as the right to privacy and the right to property—that aren't exactly spelled out in the first eight amendments.

The Tenth Amendment said something important too. It said that if the Constitution didn't explicitly give that power to the Federal Government, it is left to the States and people respectively. This is the other reason for our debt. There are checks and balances within the process. We are supposed to do appropriations bills and all of that. That might or might not work. It can't be any worse than what we are doing now.

The real check and balance is the Constitution. The Constitution has these limits on how big government can get and what government can do. If we obeyed the Constitution, we would have a balanced budget every year. If we had a balanced budget every year, would there still be things the government does? Sure.

We have to assess as a people and we have to decide—and really, this is the ultimate decision the American people have to make. Are you going to cheer for the Republicans and Democrats holding hands and having a trillion-dollar deficit or are you going to say to yourself: I am suspicious that the Republicans and Democrats are clasping hands and giving us a trillion-dollar deficit. Is it a good thing? Are we so excited about civility that we don't care what the result of civility is? Or are we really sort of misguided in thinking that people aren't yelling at each other and they have bridged their differences, but the compromise means we are all going to spend more money, we are going to ignore the Constitution, the waste is going to continue, and nothing will be fixed. Are we so sold on civility that we are willing to give up on it and say: Well, at least we are getting along together. As long as we are getting along, that is all we want.

I think we are smarter than that. I think the American people are more perceptive. I think, in the end, the American people will see through this.

I think they are going to see it as the future unfolds and as the stock market continues to be jittery. I think they are going to see it as we move forward and the ramifications of having so much debt come home.

There could be higher interest rates. Those affect not only you personally but also the massive government programs we have—Social Security and Medicare. The borrowing we do for our interest is one of the larger items. I think it is the third largest item we spend right now. As interest payments grow, they crowd out other things. Right now, we are still paying government interest in the low 2 percent or a little bit more. Imagine what happens when it is 5 percent. Even if interest stays at 2 percent, because government is growing and we have a bigger debt, we will have an \$800 billion interest payment. It will be the No. 1 one item. It will crowd out everything else.

There are ramifications. There are people who say that when you are at a 100 percent of your GDP—when your whole economy equals your debt, you are at the precipice, at the point where you may reach a point of no return.

There are ways we can fix this. Later this year, I will offer a budget that freezes spending. You say: Well, how bad could that be? We will give government the same amount they had last year. If we freeze all spending—I mean everything we spend money on—we would balance the budget within about 5 or 6 years, and we would get things back in balance if we did it.

If you talked to people up here, they would freak out. I promise you, we will get 10 or 15 votes for freezing spending to try to get it back in order.

This is what we have to ask as American people: Are you happy with your government? Are you happy with a trillion-dollar deficit? Are you happy with people who just don't seem to care? Somehow they care more about this clasping of hands and everybody getting everything, and then they get to go home for the weekend.

I think the ramifications for our country are severe and significant.

What I would ask my colleagues, as well as those across the country, is basically this: What do you want from government? Do you want some physical item? Is government here so someone can get you something and give you some physical item, such as a cell phone or a car? Is that what government is for, or is government here to preserve your liberty?

Most of us—or I would say some of us—believe that your rights are from God, that they preexist government, and that government's job is not to get you stuff; government's job is not to get somebody else's stuff for you; government's job is to preserve your liberty, to preserve our natural, God-given rights. In doing that, through your liberty or through your hard work, you may acquire stuff, and the government helps to prevent your neighbor from stealing it, but your

government shouldn't be the one stealing it from your neighbor and giving it to you.

Besides, we look at the ramifications of a society where we do think that we are going to take from one and give it to another, and we are going to do it through this government transfer program, and we look at that and ask: Is that good for a person?

A good friend of mine talks a lot about self-esteem, and I like the way he puts it. He says that self-esteem cannot be given to you. People say: Well, we need to have—everybody gets a trophy, everybody gets first place, and whether or not Johnny can read, we need to pat him on the back and make sure he feels good about whether he can read or not read. In reality, the only self-esteem you can get is from achievement.

Some people say: Oh, that is easy to say if you have achieved or done something. But you can have achievement at anything. It is a little bit akin to this talk we have had about the merits of immigration. There is merit to hard work, like picking tomatoes. There is merit to being a doctor, a lawyer, or a professor. There is merit to so many jobs, and that is also where your self-esteem comes from.

One of the things we are doing in our country is we are destroying the self-esteem and motivation of the country. What goes along with that? When we have destroyed your self-esteem, you no longer leave your house, weight problems, drug problems, and all of the things that ensue from that. People say: Oh, you are simplifying addiction; it doesn't all come from Big Government. Maybe. Maybe not. But I think there is a correlation to not working and the disease that comes from non-work.

You say: You are heartless. You are just saying that everybody should work, and there are not jobs. There is virtually full employment now. We have less than 4 percent unemployment. Yet, the way we measure it, we still have communities that have 30 percent nonworkers because they are no longer counted. This is where a lot of the problem exists in our society. A lot of the drug problem is coming from nonworkers.

So I think we have to reflect on what we want from government. Do you want something material from government? Do you want government to give you something that your neighbor has that you don't have, or do you want government to protect your God-given liberty?

I think that if we realize that the abstraction of liberty is something amazing and incredible and that is what our government is about, maybe we would bicker less and we would become more unified as a people, knowing that what you are trying to get is not something—they talk about whether coveting something is a bad thing. When you covet or you really want something of somebody else's, some of it is

because it is somebody else's, but some of it is because it is a material thing you want instead of sort of the freedom to search and seek out, through work and through life and through art and through literature, your own bit of self-esteem.

I think that if we knew what government was about and we recognized the true function of government, we wouldn't be in this state. I can tell you that I am very, very saddened by where we are. I am saddened mostly by the debate on my side. I have disagreements with the other side, but I know where they are as far as these issues are concerned. I am saddened that on my side, many people who give lip-service to believing and saying they are fiscal conservatives will vote for a bill that adds \$1 trillion to the debt. I think that if we were really honest with ourselves, we would say no.

They say: The government will shut down.

I don't want the government to shut down. I think it is a dumb idea. In fact, I proposed legislation called the Government Shutdown Protection Act. What my legislation would do is this: You have a year to do your appropriations bills. There are 12 different units of government, and that is your job. How do we make these people do their job if they won't do their job? What we say is that over this 12-month period, if you don't do your job, government will continue spending, but government will continue spending 1 percent less. So government would go on spending 99 percent of what they spent the last year, but every 90 days, we would take 1 more percent from government until the people in government decide to do their job.

I see some Members of the House did their job last year; they passed all 12 appropriations bills. Yet the Senate I think finally, in the end, passed one, 4 or 5 months into the fiscal year.

So I think if we look at it that way and say "How can we convince Congress to do its job?" that is part of the answer: passing the individual appropriations bills but also evaluating them for waste and being concerned with waste.

Probably equally important is understanding that the function of government, the powers of government are few, defined, and limited. That was a big thing that Madison talked about. When you read the Federalist Papers, he is talking about how there are very specific functions of government. Government wasn't supposed to do everything. There is nothing in the Constitution about education. You say: Oh my God, he would get the Federal Government out of the education system? Absolutely. Get them completely out. The Constitution said nothing about them being in it, and we don't have the money for it, and the State governments are better at it. I am not saying the State government can't be involved, but the Federal Government

shouldn't be involved at all in education. As a consequence of government, it gets bigger and bigger.

We take on new functions of government that really were never spelled out in the Constitution. The Department of Commerce—it could be gone, and you would never know it, probably. It could be gone and we would save \$35 million. And most of its functions are not in the Constitution.

We have to have some of that debate over what is the proper role, what is the constitutional role. How will we have that debate if we are not allowed to amend the bill? If we are given a 700-page bill the night before, nobody reads it, and they say it is done, it is a binary choice—their favorite word—binary choice, take it or leave it. I am leaving it. I could not go home and look my wife in the face; I could not go home and look my friends in the face; I could not go home and look in the faces of anybody who voted for me and say: Oh yeah, you know, President Obama, he was terrible. He had trillion-dollar deficits as far as the eye can see. But the Republican deficits are not quite as bad because they are just \$1 trillion.

That is what we are doing here. The Republican side is telling America that trillion-dollar deficits are bad when they are Democrats, but they are OK when they are Republicans. So they are telling you that deficits are bad when the other guys do it but not so bad when we do it. This is the height of hypocrisy.

This is sort of maybe the uncomfortableness that this debate engenders. If having this debate is uncomfortable, this is maybe why we don't have amendments. It is sort of backfiring because I am going to talk about this for quite a while, and we are going to vote at three in the morning because they wouldn't let me have a vote during the day, and I probably won't get a vote. I think it is misguided. We should have had 20 votes. There are votes Democrats wanted that I probably would disagree with, that I would have voted no on, but I would have voted to let them have amendments.

This is a big deal. This is our spending. This is what the Congress is supposed to do, assess our spending and how much we spend. Yet we are not going to have amendments to it. It is predecided by some secret cabal of leadership from both sides who have now clasped hands to say: We have won. The country has won. We now have a \$1 trillion deficit this year.

The American people are losing by this, so I think we have to figure out a better way. We have to figure out a way where we do our job, which is that for each of the individual appropriations bills, we look at them and we scrutinize waste.

I showed you some of the William Proxmire Golden Fleece Awards from 1968, and the same agency that has been wasting that money is still here.

We haven't limited their budget. Their budget is probably tenfold bigger than it was in 1968, and we are still doing the crazy stuff.

Actually, let's do the one I can't resist. Here is a good one from the same group of people who brought you Neil Armstrong and \$700,000 to study. What did he say? One small step for man, one large step for mankind. These people—they one-up even Neil Armstrong. They wanted to know whether Japanese quail are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine. Inquiring minds want to know.

The thing is, I think we—I wish that there were a button and that we could ask people to just sort of dial in and push a button. Do you think Japanese quail are more promiscuous on cocaine? We spent \$356,000 studying this. This is the craziness.

Why do we do this every year? Why isn't it getting better? We don't look at it. So if you have a 700-page bill and nobody ever looks at it, how are we going to find this? Even in an appropriations bill—if we did an appropriations bill that included this, it would still be 500 pages long and you would have to hunt long and hard to find this. Why do we have conditions on how you spend your money? Because we don't look at it. Nobody reads any of these bills. We don't do individual bills.

People come to my office and say: I am for legal aid, and I think people should be able to have a lawyer, and poor people should get help. I listen to them, and I say: Well, you know, I have never voted on that, and I probably won't ever vote on that. I won't even vote on the department of government that oversees legal aid because I am given a 700-page bill that has all of the government spending.

What is ironic about this is that we have dozens and dozens of people who come to our office every day saying: We like this part of government. I say: Well, I never get to vote on it, so I don't know if I can help you or hurt you because I never get to vote on that part of government. They make me vote on all of government, so it is either all or none. The binary choice is shut it down or keep it open, but don't reform it. I think that is a terrible choice.

I did a hearing this week and I called it "The Terrible, Rotten, No-Good Way to Run Your Government." That is what I believe. It is a terrible, rotten, no-good way to run your government, and we shouldn't do it.

I will tell you this. This is a secret. So don't tell anyone. I have talked to probably 50 Senators in the last 3 weeks, and most of them say: I kind of agree with you. It is a really crummy way. This is the last time I am voting for it.

Didn't you tell me that last year and the year before, that this is your last CR, that you were never going to vote for another one?

Do you know what would happen? Let's say that this speech was so per-

suasive that all of my colleagues came in here and got a conscience and voted down the spending and said: Hooley with all of you; we are not going to spend all that money. The government would shut down over the weekend. We would come back on Monday and do our job. We would start looking at each thing individually, and we would say that these are things we shouldn't spend it on and these are things we should, and we would begin that process.

The other thing is, if you pass one appropriations bill, then you don't have to worry about that part. That is more than one-twelfth of government; it is probably about a third of the government. You passed that, so then you don't have to worry about shutting down. Each time you pass an appropriations bill, you move on to another. We have to do that.

I think the thing that is disappointing to probably everybody in here, Republican and Democrat—they will tell you: Oh, it is a terrible way to run the government. Yet we are doing it. We did it a week ago, we did it 3 weeks ago, and we did it a month ago. This is the fourth time we have done it this year. Since I have been here, we have never passed all of the appropriations bills. We have never had extended debate in committees.

I was thinking about this the other day. I was thinking, what if the first day you got sworn in, the leadership sat in the chair, and all 100 people were required to be here or requested strongly to be here, and we had a frank discussion, and we said to both sides: This is the year we are not doing any continuing resolutions. Guess what—it will just shut down if we don't, but we are going to do our job. In the first 3 months of the fiscal year, we are going to have hearings, and the main job will be to authorize and appropriate the money—3 months for each committee. That is a pretty long time, actually. Then maybe spend a whole week or 2 weeks in the committee with amendments for specific things like, we have decided this year not to study what cocaine does for Japanese quail, so this would be the year we finally stop doing that. You would have that debate, 3 months on committees, and 9 months left to do the spending bills.

Then, if you were sitting in the chair, you would say: This is the way we are going to do it. And each appropriations bill—we are going to take 3 weeks on the floor to do it—3 weeks. We are not going to putter around, obfuscate, and not have any amendments.

One reason we are going to send this over to the House at midnight is that we are hoping they are too tired to vote no. So we are going to send it over late tonight or at 3 in the morning, but it is purposefully done. We don't do amendments. We don't do anything in a timely fashion. We wait around until the very end, and at the very end, we are trying to wear people out so there isn't sufficient energy to really scrutinize your government and its spending.

We have had all week; we could have done all this.

But let's say we did committee hearings for 3 months, and then for 9 months—the rest of the fiscal year—we did the appropriations bills, and then we spent 3 weeks on the floor and let people bring amendments. My first amendment would be that the National Science Foundation would no longer be able to do most of the stuff they do. The only way you do this is by giving them less money—maybe half as much; I don't know, 25 percent of what they get—a lot less, because they are spending a lot of it on things they shouldn't be doing.

This goes on throughout government. We have the same debate all the time. We had this debate with the post office. They are losing \$1 billion a quarter. That is quite a bit of money. They came before our committee and said we need to pay them sufficiently. You can't have good-quality people unless you pay them. They pay the top guy like \$1 million, \$1.5 million to keep talent? How much talent does it take to lose \$1 billion a quarter? I can lose half a billion for \$500,000 a year. So it is the ridiculous notion of government.

Sometimes I wonder, are people in government—is government inherently stupid or populated by people who are inherently stupid? I don't think so. I think there are well-meaning people in government, so they are not inherently stupid, but they don't give the right or proper incentives.

Think about it in your life. If I were to ask you for \$10,000 each and say "I have this business proposition; will you give me \$10,000?" you are going to think long and hard about what you had to do to get the \$10,000. And if you give it to me, you are probably going to have a little pang inside, hoping that I pay dividends to you and that you get your money back. But it is really a heartfelt decision. It doesn't make it always the right decision, but it is a heartfelt decision, and you really struggle with every fiber of your being to make sure you made the right choice, even though it is not always going to be right.

In government, imagine your city council person, \$10,000—it is not their money. Then imagine that you go to the State legislature, and it is not \$10,000, it is \$2 million. Then imagine you get up here, and it is now \$2 billion or maybe \$200 billion. It is not their money.

So when we look at government and ask why government is so bad, Milton Friedman hit the nail on the head. Milton Friedman said: "Nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as he spends his own." That is the truth of it, and that is the way government is. Government will never be efficient because of the very nature of government. It is not an argument for no government, but it is an argument for minimizing how big government is.

Government should never be involved in something that somebody else is al-

ready doing, that the private sector can do, because government will never be as efficient because nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as they spend their own. This actually goes hand in hand with what the Founders thought. The Founders thought people ought to be left free to do most things themselves, so they very significantly limited what the Federal Government is supposed to do.

So as we move forward in this debate and as we look at what can be done to bring back the greatness of this country, I think we do have to be worried about the debt we are accumulating. My hope is that both sides of the aisle will look long and hard and say that this isn't the way we should run our government—not just say this and say "next time" but maybe say "this time."

I promise you, both sides of the aisle have told me this week: It is a terrible way to run government; you are exactly right. Continuing resolutions, putting all the spending in one bill, not reading it, having no analysis, and not getting rid of the waste, is a terrible way to run the government. But almost everybody who told me that this week is going to vote for this.

So the only way this ever gets fixed is to call these people and convince them they need to do their job, which is do the individual appropriations bills. They need to pay attention to the Constitution, or, frankly, you need new people. That is what the American people have to decide: Do you need new people, or are you happy with them borrowing \$1 trillion?

I think it is completely and utterly irresponsible and something no American family would do. I don't care whether you are a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent, no American family lives the way your government does. It is completely and utterly irresponsible.

As we look at this debate, my hope is that both sides will come together and say: Enough is enough. This is the time—tonight—I say no.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, please inform me when 10 minutes has expired.

I rise tonight to let the military know that we may have a short night in the Senate, but you are going have better days ahead. This whole exercise, for me, is about you. It is about those who have been fighting this war for the last 17 years. It is about stopping the madness created by the Congress in 2011.

What we did in 2011 was we came up with a budget proposal called sequestration. If we could not find a bipartisan path forward to cut \$1.2 trillion in the Federal budget over a decade, we would punish the military by taking \$600 billion out of the military and \$600 billion out of nondefense spending and leave entitlements alone. Nobody

thought it would happen. There was a penalty clause in the Budget Control Act to make sure that the supercommittee would act responsibly. Guess what. They didn't. There is no use blaming them over everybody else. The bottom line is, we couldn't reach a budget agreement. We spent \$47 trillion over the next 10 years, which is how much we will spend. We couldn't save \$1.2 trillion, so sequestration kicked in.

What has it done to our military? This is what General Mattis, the Secretary of Defense, said:

Let me be clear: As hard as the last 16 years of war have been on our military, no enemy in the field has done as much harm to the readiness of U.S. military than the combined impact of the Budget Control Act's defense spending caps, worsened by operating for 10 of the last 11 years under continuing resolutions of varied and unpredictable duration.

This is the Secretary of Defense telling the Congress that no enemy on the battlefield has done more damage to our military than the budget agreement that we reached in 2011.

I want to congratulate President Trump for keeping his campaign promise to rebuild the military.

In case you couldn't understand what I said, here it is in writing. Spend some time looking at it. This is one of the most respected warriors of his generation, who is now Secretary of Defense, telling the Congress to end the madness. Tonight we are going to end the madness. If we have to lose some sleep, we are going to end the madness.

We are going to spend \$160 billion over the next 2 years rebuilding a military that has been in decline since 2011. How bad is it? It is terrible. If you don't believe me, just listen to what our commanders say. About 60 percent of the F-18s in the Navy aren't able to fly. We have lost more people in training accidents than we have lost on the battlefield. If you ask every military commander, they will tell you that sequestration has done a lot of damage when it comes to our military readiness. This \$160 billion infusion of cash is much needed.

When you talk about deficits, here is what I can tell you. We are spending, GDP-wise, at the lowest level on defense really since World War II, when you look at GDP spending on defense. It has been above 4, close to 5 percent of GDP; we are in the 3.5-percent range. When I hear Senator PAUL say we have doubled the defense budget, compared to GDP spending on defense, we are at the low end.

What has happened since 2011? This is the way the world has turned out since we passed sequestration through the Budget Control Act. The Syrian civil war came about, the collapse of Libya, the rise of ISIL, the invasion of the Ukraine, and the annexation of Crimea by Russia. China is building islands over land claimed by others. Yemen is falling apart. North Korea is pressing toward the capability to hit the homeland with a nuclear-tip missile. We have had cyber attacks come from North Korea.

The bottom line is, since 2011, all hell has broken loose, and we have been standing around here looking at each other instead of listening to our commanders. President Trump has listened. President Trump is behind this budget agreement—2 years of funding to rebuild the military at a time they need every dollar they can get.

As to the deficits, yes, they bother me, but here is what I can tell the public without any hesitation: You can eliminate the Department of Defense, and you are not going to change the debt situation long term for the country. Two-thirds of the debt is driven by mandatory spending in interest on the debt itself. Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are entitlement programs that are growing in a tremendous fashion because the baby boomers are retiring en masse. We have fewer workers, and all these trust funds are failing. That is what drives the debt, not military spending. One-third of the Federal budget is discretionary spending. Out of that one-third comes the military, and it is about 50 percent of the one-third.

All I can say is that I want to applaud Senator MCCONNELL and Senator SCHUMER for reaching an agreement. The nondefense spending is about \$160-something billion. What does that mean? That helps the FBI. Without this infusion of cash, the FBI will have fewer agents in 2018 than they did in 2013. They are on the frontline of defending the Nation as much as anybody else. The Department of Homeland Security, the CIA, the National Security Administration—all of these non-defense agencies have a defense role, and they will benefit from this budget agreement.

Sequestration did not get us out of debt. Fixing sequestration is not going to add to the debt in any serious way.

Every Republican voted for the tax cuts because we believe the \$1.5 trillion and then some will be made up by economic growth. I think we are more right than wrong about that.

When it comes to defense spending, Republicans and Democrats have finally listened to this statement by General Mattis, and all of us came together behind our President to increase defense spending in a fashion relevant to the need.

To those who believe that the military is well-funded, you are not listening to anybody in the military. You haven't spent any time in the field. I have been to Iraq and Afghanistan 42 times in the last decade. I can tell you the pressure that has been placed upon our military. You have to put all of the money in deploying people—robbing Peter to pay Paul—so training suffers and readiness suffers.

It has been a miserable experience to be in the military the last 4, 5 years. Families go lacking. People are deployed more than they should be because we are not big enough. This \$160 billion is going to allow us to grow the Navy. We are moving toward a 350-ship

Navy, not 278. We have the smallest Navy since 1915, the smallest Army since 1940—that is where we are headed under sequestration. This turns it around.

President Trump, thank you for keeping your promise to rebuild our military.

To Senator SCHUMER and Senator MCCONNELL, thank you for working together in getting us on track to rebuild the military and help some accounts that need help outside the military.

To the Members of the body, there are a million reasons to vote no on any bill. While I respect how you vote, I don't know how you go to the military and explain your vote if you vote no. How do you tell those in uniform, who are getting by under incredibly difficult conditions because they don't have the money to train and be ready—they are in a hot war. What do you tell them—well, I voted no because this and that?

The deficit and debt are a problem. Senator PAUL, to his great credit, is willing to reform entitlements. I have worked with him and Senator LEE to reform Medicare and do something about Social Security to keep these programs from going broke. I will compliment Senator PAUL. He is a man of great political courage when it comes to taking on hard issues like entitlement reform. But when it comes to military, I could not be more different. He is holding us up. He has every right to do so.

I just want to let our soldiers know, and all their families, that we are going to wait him out and that you are not the reason we are in debt. The money we are giving you, you take gladly. There will be a smaller pay raise in here. But Senator PAUL's solution to raising pay for the military is to withdraw from Afghanistan.

I have not heard one general tell me we can leave Afghanistan safely. That day will come, but we are nowhere near that day. All I can tell the public is, the last time we took our eye off Afghanistan, we got 9/11. I don't know how much money we spent after 9/11, but we lost almost 3,000 Americans. Based on 19 people who were willing to kill themselves, they took almost 3,000 of us with them. Just think what would have happened if we had left too soon. We are not going to do that again—never again.

I trust those in our military leadership. I am proud of my Commander in Chief, President Trump, for giving them the ability to fight the war. The gloves are now off. They just need the resources to take the fight to the enemy and turn it around because what happens over there matters here. If you don't believe me, remember 9/11.

Whatever it takes and as long as it takes, we are going to increase defense spending in the next 24 hours. Then we are going to start marching to fix other problems. The Dreamers have waited a very long time to bring certainty to their lives. Next week, we

will take up their problems, their plight. The one thing I can tell you today is, in the next 24 hours, we are going to end the nightmare for the military. Next week, we will take up solutions to help the Dream Act population and secure our borders. We can do two things at once.

If you want to get the country out of debt, count me in. If you want to tell younger people they have to work longer and cannot retire at 65 because we live so much longer, count me in. If you want people at my income level to take less from Social Security because I can afford to give some up, count me in. If you want people in my income level to pay more into Medicare because we should, count me in.

The one thing for which you cannot count on me is to use the military as a punching bag and blame it on them that we are in debt. We are not in debt because of them. What General Mattis said is we can always afford freedom, and we can afford survival.

If you don't believe the people we are fighting would kill us all if they could, then you have a short memory. The only reason 3,000 died on 9/11 and not 3 million is they couldn't get the weapons with which to kill more of us. If North Korea keeps going the way it is going, God help us all. If the Iranians ever go nuclear, God help us all. We live in dangerous times.

If radical Islam could get its hands on a chemical or a biological weapon, it would use it. The best way to keep them from hurting us here is to stay over there and partner with our Afghan partners, our Iraqi partners, and others. More Muslims have died in this fight than anybody else. They have seen the face of the enemy, and I have certainly seen it. The best way to keep it off our shores is to have a strong military that creates lines of defenses over there so we can be safe here.

I am very happy tonight. I had to miss my flight, and I am not going to get much sleep, but what we are doing pales in comparison to what the military has done for the last 5 or 6 years—a lot with less. They have taken on too much danger and too much risk because the Congress has sat on the sidelines and watched Rome burn. Those days are over.

Whenever we vote, we are going to vote. I will make a prediction that we are going to get more than 60 votes to fund the military. When it gets to the House, to my fiscal conservative friends, I understand there are things in the nondefense spending aspect of this they will not like—I get that—but there are Democrats in this body, and there are Democrats in the House, and they have a say. That is just the way it is.

So I will sleep well tonight. I may not sleep long, but I will sleep well in knowing that the men and women in uniform, who have suffered so much for so long, will be better off in the morning. A short night for me will mean better days ahead for them.

All I can say to my colleagues is not to let these groups mislead them about what their job is. Their job as Members of the U.S. Congress, in my opinion, is to defend this Nation above all else. Without national security, Social Security really doesn't matter. Without national security, everything we enjoy could be lost.

The primary role of the Federal Government, in my view, is to give the men and women in uniform, who are all volunteers, what they need to keep us safe. Come tomorrow, they are going to have more. If it means we stay up late tonight, so be it.

To the congressional leadership, thank you. To the President, thank you for being a Commander in Chief we have desperately needed for the last 8-plus years. To my colleagues, vote yes. You may get some criticism from people who run blogs, but the next time you see a soldier, you will know you voted right.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. President.

I will be making a unanimous consent request in just a second. The reason I am doing this is that every hour we go without funding the military, every day that we wait, and the longer we continue this madness, the worse it is for those who fight in a war we can't afford to lose.

I think that Congress, in the words of General Mattis, has done more damage to the military than any enemy on the battlefield. So tonight I am speaking for you. We are going to end this madness as soon as we possibly can.

I respect Senator PAUL, who is a fiscal conservative—every bit of it—but when it comes to national security, not so much. He wants to do entitlement reform. God bless him. That is where the money is at.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 8 p.m. today, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think no one in this body more than I wants to continue funding the military. I have three nephews serving in the military. My father-in-law is a career Air Force man, and my dad served in the military. However, I think it is also important when we talk about how we have a strong country that we have to talk about solvency. There comes a point in time when you borrow so much money that it actually becomes a threat to your national security.

It was Admiral Milliken, the former Chief of Staff, who said that the biggest threat to our national security currently is our national debt.

I think there is an irony that those who criticized President Obama for trillion-dollar deficits are now in the body saying: Oh, we must pass this trillion-dollar deficit.

Yes, I do think it is important that we have this debate. What I have been arguing for tonight is not a delay, not any kind of permanent delay. What I have been arguing for is an open debate.

So if we are having all the spending, every last bit of spending has been glommed together in one bill, 700 pages. No one has read it. Nobody has any idea what is in it, and there is no reform. I think if we are going to do that, I think we ought to at least have amendments and have an open debate.

If we are not going to have an open debate, if it is going to be "take it or leave it," frankly, I will leave it because I think my duty. What I told the American people was that I care. I care about how much debt we are accumulating in this country, and I think it is a danger to our national security to accumulate so much debt.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. I know what is in it—\$160 billion over the next 2 years that is absolutely necessary to rebuild a military that is in decline. If you don't believe me, ask the Secretary of Defense.

There are other things in this bill, some of which I like and some of which I don't. I know this: If the President of the United States, who is our Commander in Chief, says he will sign it if we will send it to him, and the reason that we are not going to send it to him right now is because Senator PAUL has every right to object, this is a debate worth having.

What is the most important thing for our country?

The deficit and debt are real, and, to his credit, Senator PAUL is willing to do the hard things, such as to change the age of retirement and to means test those benefits. That is how you get out of debt.

What we are doing tonight is putting money into the pipeline of a military that has suffered mightily since Senator PAUL and others voted for sequestration in 2011.

Enough is enough. The day of reckoning is upon us. Every hour, every minute matters to me. So this is what I am trying to tell people back in South Carolina: If you are worried about the debt and deficit, count me in. But to go there, you have to do something that very few people will do, and Senator PAUL is not in the category of the very few.

On the debt and deficit, I give him high marks—on national security, not so much.

He said tonight on television that the best way to give the military a pay raise is to withdraw from Afghanistan. Go over to Afghanistan before you say that. Name one military commander that believes that is a rational approach to increasing military pay. You had better pay them a lot more because they are going to be fighting for a lot longer if we leave now.

How much has 9/11 cost us? It is this kind of thinking that led to 9/11. The only people I know who like that idea are the Taliban. They wish we would leave tomorrow.

ISIL is now present in Afghanistan. I wish the world were not so dangerous, and I wish it wasn't so complicated, but it is. Have we learned nothing from radical Islam? "Leave them alone, and they will leave you alone" does not work. Their goal is to destroy their faith and rebuild it in the image of their view of Islam, to destroy our friends in Israel, and to come after Christians, vegetarians, Libertarians. They are coming after you, and are the only thing between them and us are the men and women in the military—the 1 percent who have suffered mightily.

In the words of General Mattis: No enemy has done more damage to our readiness than budget cuts plus continuing resolutions.

He is a nice man. Let me say it more directly: Congress has shot down more planes through budget cuts than any enemy could hope to. Congress has crippled the Navy more than the Chinese or the Russians could have ever hoped to. Congress has made it harder for people to be with their families because our military is too small for the times in which we live.

The times in which we live are the most dangerous since the 1930s. I will repeat that again. The only reason 3,000 of us died on 9/11 is that they couldn't find a way to kill more of us. If they could ever find that way, they will do it. As long as we have some soldiers in Afghanistan, Afghanistan is not likely to be the platform for the second 9/11.

If you think this is over the top, talk to the people fighting the war. Go there yourself. I spent a lot of time in Afghan prisons and detention centers, looking at the enemy, as a reservist and as a Senator. I know exactly what they have in mind for us.

Here is my pledge to those who are doing the fighting. We are going to end this insanity. We are going to rebuild the military.

President Trump, thank you so much. Thank you for understanding that debt and deficits are no excuse to leave the warfighter hanging out.

What do you tell somebody who doesn't have the equipment they need to go to the fight? Well, the debt and deficit are the reasons you don't get any more. If we have to raise taxes—whatever it is—to make sure that we can keep our military going, I will do it.

I have come to conclude, like Ronald Reagan, that the best way to help the economy is to cut taxes. Ronald Reagan cut taxes, he rebuilt the military, and he engaged in entitlement reform. We should follow his lead. Ronald Reagan did not believe in this isolationist approach. He believed that on the other side of that wall is an evil empire, and he stared it down.

I went to the military in 1981. The first thing I got was a 25-percent increase in pay by Ronald Reagan. I liked that guy from that day until now. The morale was low after the Carter years, and readiness was in decline. Reagan changed everything.

President Trump, I think you are on course to change everything. We are taking the gloves off. We are changing the rules of engagement. We are going to provide the equipment and training that our men and women desperately need. We are going to set aside these budget cuts.

To Senator MCCONNELL and Senator SCHUMER, thank you for coming together. To those who object to some things in this bill, I get it. But what is more important—the debt or deficit or the war in which we are in? There is nothing in this bill, if it went away tomorrow, that would get us out of debt. The debt that we are adding to defend the Nation can be fixed in 5 minutes if we did some entitlement reform.

When I was 21, my mom died. When I was 22, my dad died. My sister was 13. We moved in with an aunt and uncle who never made more than \$25,000 in their life working in the cotton mills. If it wasn't for survivor benefits and social security going to my sister, we would have had a hard time making it. If it weren't for Pell grants, she probably wouldn't have gone to college.

I am 62, and I am not married. I don't have any kids. I make \$175,000 a year. I will gladly give up some of my Social Security so people who need it more than I can have it. I will gladly pay more into Medicare to keep it from falling apart. I think a lot of people like me would do that if they were asked. So I don't need any lectures about the debt and the deficit.

We are in a shooting war. We had more people die in training accidents than we had in combat because we made them do too much for too long without enough. That is going to end.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 8 p.m. today, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think there are some interesting points when we look

at our debt, in trying to figure out how best to fix it.

What we have been dealing with today is a spending bill of about 700 pages, but it does deal only with what is called discretionary spending. This is military and nonmilitary spending, and it is about one-third of what we spend over all. The other two-thirds is called entitlement spending or mandatory spending.

So often people will say: Well, we can't cut the discretionary spending because we are not doing anything to the two-thirds of the spending that is mandatory; this is Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, and some welfare programs. It is true that they are growing at a rapid rate. They are growing at about 6 percent and the military and nonmilitary are growing at about 2 percent.

So there is more of a problem on the entitlement side, but often you will hear people come to the floor and say: Well, we can't. We have cut all this discretionary spending, and what we really need to do is entitlements.

Yet this is a bit of a canard, because I have been here 6 years, and I have tried to push entitlement reform and tried to push cost savings, but we have never had a bill come to the floor.

So people say: Well, I am not going to cut this, but if the other were to come to the floor with mandatory spending cuts—how come nobody brings it to the floor? It never comes to the floor. So two-thirds of the budget or spending is never being cut, and it is growing at 6 percent. It is a problem. Entitlements have to be contained.

Some of the problem is not the Republicans' or the Democrats' fault. It is basically a function that we are living longer. When Social Security was created, the average life expectancy was 65 years or less. Now the average life expectancy is about 80. So you can see how the costs have risen dramatically. We are living a lot longer.

The other thing that happened is that somewhere along the way, when we were victorious in World War II, we came home and had a lot of babies, for one reason or another. They are the baby boomers—60 to 70 million of them. There is an enormous cost of retiring baby boomers and we are living longer.

These things have added to entitlement costs. There are things we could do. I recommended that we gradually raise the age of eligibility. People say: Oh, you don't want people to get their Social Security at 65? Well, it is already 67, actually.

On Medicare, the problem is that if we leave things as is, Medicare is \$35 trillion short, and Social Security is about \$7 trillion short. So we are \$7 trillion short in Social Security and \$35 trillion short in Medicare. You have to do something about the entitlements.

However, the same grievance I have with the process here is the same grievance I have with entitlement reform. I have been pushing for it for 6 years. I have produced bills that never get here.

So the leadership on both sides—and in fact, I have heard this before—will say: You can talk about it, but don't put it on paper.

So many people are for entitlement reform until it comes to the specifics. You saw this in the debate over ObamaCare. Try getting rid of any kind of entitlement or lessening it or making it less effective, and people freak out at that.

It is true that we have to look at entitlements. If we were to look at entitlements, it would take some pressure off of the military spending, but it is also important to put military spending in perspective. We have doubled military spending since 2001. We have put a lot of money into the military.

Then there is the question of what is national defense. Is defense having weapons to defend ourselves against attack, having troops and armaments and being able to defend and occasionally go to where the attackers are, or is it the job of the military to be involved in every civil war around the world?

Currently, we are involved in at least seven different wars. None of them have been voted on. Our Founding Fathers said that the executive branch was the most prone to war, and, therefore, they gave that power to Congress. Yet we haven't voted on any of the seven wars we are involved with. There are seven different wars around, at least.

There have been people talking about authorizing war, and they want us to be involved legally somehow in 34-some-odd countries. So we should have a more robust debate. We haven't been able to force a debate on whether or not we are at war for the last 7 years. I have been trying to get a vote on whether or not we are at war. We certainly appear to be at war. We are in Yemen. We are in Somalia. We are in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Niger, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. We are in a lot of different places. Yet the Senate has never voted on going to war. And you say: Well, we are going after those people who attacked us on 9/11. Well, we killed those people. The people whom we are now embattled with are sons and daughters of other people who might have the same ideology, but they are spread all across the world.

We had a manned raid in Yemen not too long ago where we have not declared war. When we had the manned raid, sadly, a Navy SEAL died, and a bunch of people in the village died. We were told we had information to get the enemy, but we also have to look from the perspective of the people who live there. You say: Oh, you would look from the perspective of our enemies? Well, no. You have to understand your adversaries, you have to understand your enemy, and you have to understand their response if you ever want to figure out a final solution or some kind of ending of a war.

You have to think about when the manned raid came at night with night

vision goggles to a small village. Let's say the people were bad people. Let's say they were terrorists and someday might have come here. Well, we killed them, but we also killed their wives and their children too. I don't fault our soldiers. Our soldiers go in in the middle of the night, and they are given a command. It is not the soldiers' fault; it is ours for having an unclear mission or for sending them into an impossible mission.

There is no clear-cut war. There are three or four different factions fighting in Yemen, and here is the point I have been making. The neoconservatives are histrionic about, oh, Iran is supporting the Houthi rebels. Well, on the other side are Sunni extremists who are supported by Saudi Arabia, which also supports Sunni extremism across the world. There is also a third party in Yemen that is al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula. My fear is that when you go in and you say "Oh, the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels—we must kill them, and we are going to support the Sunnis from Saudi Arabia," you have to ask yourself "Well, what about al-Qaida? Do they get stronger or weaker?"

Here is my fear. We go into a civil war that nobody in America knows about, and nobody can know up from down on, and we decide to get involved. What if the end result is chaos? What if out of that chaos arises al-Qaida? What if the end result of our getting involved in the civil war is that they all kill each other and we end up with a civil war in which al-Qaida becomes stronger?

Mr. GRAHAM. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. The interesting thing about it is that as you look at the war in Yemen, it is—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request?

Mr. PAUL. Yes, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. PAUL. So as you look at the war in Yemen and you go back and forth and you say "What are the results of getting involved in this civil war?" it may well be that al-Qaida gets stronger.

If you look at what happened in Syria, the neoconservatives went crazy and said: We should support the moderates in Syria who are fighting against Assad. Well, it turns out the moderates in Syria were al-Qaida-linked, ISIS-linked jihadists. In fact, with one group the neocons said that we must give weapons to, it turned out that as soon as they got anti-tank weapons from us, they said—and this is a quote from one of the leaders days after they got anti-tank weapons from us: When we are done fighting Assad—not ISIS, Assad—we are going to attack Israel to take back the Golan Heights.

We did this, and we pumped millions of dollars and hundreds of tons of weapons into Syria, and it didn't work.

When we finally quit doing the funding and sending of weapons, that is when the Kurds rose up, with our help, and actually did a much better job.

The thing is, there is a perpetual war crowd that ignores the Constitution, and they will say that we should be at war everywhere, and we don't need to vote on it. One, that is a terrible insult to our forefathers and a terrible insult to the Founding Fathers, but as you look at this and you look at the debate, it is also incredibly draining to the Treasury and often has unintended consequences.

As we got involved in the Syrian civil war, the so-called moderates—many of them jihadists, many of them al-Qaida; the fiercest fighters actually were more al-Qaida linked, al-Nusra—began pushing back on Assad, and there was chaos. Guess who arose in the chaos there: ISIS. So really ISIS became a result of or at least was accentuated by our intervention in Syria, and then we had to go back in and fight ISIS.

Here is a scenario that could happen in Yemen. We decide we are going to go into Yemen and we are going to support the Sunni extremists, whom the Saudis are for, against the Houthi extremists, whom Iran is for. But in the chaos, perhaps al-Qaida rises again, and we have to get more heavily involved. I think there is no end to the idea that we are going to kill a terrorist group in the middle of the desert in Yemen and, somehow, there will not be more.

I will give you an example of how sometimes what we get involved with actually backfires and causes more terrorists to arise. We have been feeding the Saudi planes bombs. We probably have sold them the bombers as well. But we have been feeding them bombs, we have been helping them with targeting, and it turns out they have been targeting civilians. They targeted a funeral procession. The Saudi bombs that we gave them—we paid for and we gave them; they may have paid for them indirectly, but with the Saudi bombs that are U.S. bombs, they ended up bombing in Yemen a funeral procession and killing about 150 people who were unarmed and wounding 500.

You say: Oh, well, I don't care what they think. I don't care what their response is. Well, think about what their response might be and then decide whether you care, and I am not saying I am sympathetic to the people. I don't know the people enough to be sympathetic or not, but I am aware of their response to being bombed in a funeral procession.

My guess is that 1,000 years from now, the people and their families will, through oral tradition, remember the bombing of the funeral procession. I am not kidding you. These people have a long memory. The Sunnis and the Shia have been fighting for 1,000 years. They remember the massacre at Karbala. I promise you they still celebrate when one side massacred the other, and that was at least 500 to 600 years ago—

maybe more. So there is a long memory going on in this, and we have to decide whether it is more beneficial to kill one of them than to have the result of 10 new terrorists created by that. The thing is, they are everywhere. There is a branch of Islam that is radical and that does wish our demise and wish us harm, but we have to decide what the best way of containing this is. What is the best way of defending our country?

If you look at it, what I think you will find is that there have been a great deal of unintended consequences. One is an enormous drain on the Treasury, but two is a lot of unintended consequences as far as sometimes actually making it worse. I think our intervention in Syria actually exacerbated the rise of ISIS. I think our intervention in Yemen could well exacerbate or cause or allow the rise of al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula again.

It is confusing when you ask: What do the soldiers want? The only soldiers who are allowed to speak are the ones at the very top or those who are retired. Even at the very top, most generals who are still active can't give a full opinion. They may give it to the administration but typically not on television or to the public. But the average soldier really is never asked for his or her opinion. I understand that, and I understand the role of the order of the military—that you have to take orders.

The interesting thing is, as you meet the average soldier—I promise you this is true. If people were able to do this and we were able to actually take a poll of thousands and thousands of ordinary soldiers, I think you could ask them: Do we still have a purpose in Afghanistan? Are you ready for another deployment? You have been on six deployments to Afghanistan. Are you excited about the next deployment? Freedom is going to ring out in Afghanistan. They are going to be a great, self-sufficient country, and we will have won the war.

I think most of the soldiers who have been there will actually tell you the opposite. I have met dozens and dozens and dozens of these soldiers who have come home and actually are unclear now as to what our motives are. They are unclear as to what our goal is, and they are unclear as to what the end result is.

We had two Under Secretaries recently in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. One was Under Secretary of Defense and another was Under Secretary of State. One of the Senators asked them: How many Taliban are there? How many people are we fighting? They seem like pretty honest questions. He said: You don't have to tell me the exact number. Tell me about how many we are fighting.

Neither one of them knew. They said: We have to wait until fighting season, and then we will find out. Well, any time you are in a situation where there is a fighting season—and every year

there is a fighting season—maybe that indicates this is a perpetual war that is not going to end. But neither of these guys knows whether there are 100,000 Taliban or there are 10,000 Taliban.

Interestingly, for the neocons who think this is going to end like Hiroshima and Nagasaki and there will be unconditional surrender, it will never end that way. Even Secretary Mattis—when I have asked him “Will there ultimately be negotiation with the Taliban?”—says that actually there will be. The Under Secretary of the Department of Defense, in our meeting, said that the goal was to push them toward negotiation.

Here is the interesting thing about Afghanistan. We have had as many as 100,000 troops—President Obama, who ran on a message of having less war and less involvement and was mercilessly criticized by the Republican side, actually escalated the war in Afghanistan to a great degree. So President Obama put 100,000 troops into Afghanistan, and what happened? The enemy melted away. I am sure we killed some. We won some battles, but they sort of melted away into our good ally Pakistan, for the most part. But then they come back, and people say: We left too early. Well, how long are we going to stay? Are we going to stay forever?

We put in 100,000 troops, and it temporarily pacified Afghanistan. After we brought the troops down, now the Taliban control maybe one-third—some say maybe half—of the territory. You say: Well, if we leave, the Taliban will take over. Well, how long is it going to take until the Afghans step up and fight for themselves?

One of the biggest problems we have had is infiltration of the Afghan Army and their actually shooting us on the base. It is ostensibly not the soldiers; it is people from the enemy who have infiltrated.

At the same time, there has been such enormous corruption there. When Karzai ruled Afghanistan, his brother was accused of being in the drug trade. My good friend, THOMAS MASSIE from the House of Representatives, often says that we spent \$8 billion eradicating their poppy crop. Poppy is the plant they use to make heroin. They had their best crop last year, so something is not working. He often comments that for \$8 billion he could buy a lot of Roundup and probably do a better job. But the thing is, we are aren't doing a very good job. The mission doesn't seem to have the purpose that it once had.

Look, if I had been here, I would have voted to go there after 9/11. We needed to disrupt the terrorist networks, we needed to punish them, and we needed to make sure they couldn't attack us again. It was a noble endeavor, but there has to be an end. I think part of our problem is that we are unsure how to define victory, so we never can have it.

There was a proposal to have a big military parade, and many of my

friends who have served in the military were a little bit worried about that because the image has been somewhat an image we have seen more in totalitarian governments than in our own. We really haven't had a habit of it, but I was looking at a story, and it said that we did have a big parade after we had won the first Iraq war, and the troops did parade through. I am not completely against having a parade necessarily, but my suggestion is this: Why don't we bring the 14,000 troops home from Afghanistan, declare victory, and have a parade because then there really would be something to celebrate—bringing those 14,000 troops home.

I think if we were involved in less war, we could pay our troops better. We have an enormous number of veterans retiring after 15, 16 years. We have never been at war constantly for 16 years. We have a lot of veterans who have been wounded, and to take care of them, it is going to take enormous resources. All of us want to provide those resources, but the thing is, if we continue in this perpetual war mode, are we eventually going to run out of money so that we can't even take care of our own veterans?

What we are really looking at tonight is a trillion-dollar deficit, and I do think that deficit really does threaten our national security. I think our foreign policy threatens our national security in the sense that there are things that we need to upgrade. We need to take care of our nuclear arsenal. We need to take care of our bombers. We need to have the most modern planes and technology, but we often can't have them because we are involved in so many wars.

People talk about the Romans getting overextended. We are everywhere, and we always think somehow it is our responsibility to take care of everything. I think that in many parts of the world, particularly in Afghanistan, they see—since Genghis Khan, people have been going across Afghanistan, conquering it, going back across it, and then somebody new comes. But each time the indigenous people have been strong enough to ward off and eventually get rid of their attackers. Their attackers wear out.

It is the same way now. Some of the people like our being there. Some of them have been honest, upright, good people. Some have been crooks. Karzai and his family were involved in the drug trade.

The other problem is this—and this is a real problem that the other side fails to acknowledge. Afghanistan is not really a country. Afghanistan is an area of Central Asia that Westerners drew a line around in the late teens or twenties; it may have been 1922.

We draw this line around Afghanistan, and we call it a country, but it is not really a country. The far western part speaks Farsi or is related, in many ways, to the Iranian people and has more in common with them. The

northern tribes have more in common with the Uzbeks, the Kazakhs, and different nationalities to the north. The Pashtuns are on both sides of the Pakistan border. If you ask any of these disparate people whom their allegiance is to, they will tell you, primarily, their allegiance is to their local warlords, the local elders, or local council, but they don't have much allegiance to Kabul. They have never really seen themselves as subservient to the capital. So when we go there and say we are going to create a nation, it isn't a nation that can be created because they are people who may not want to be part of a nation.

Iraq has a little of the same thing. You have the Sunni-Shia split that is 1,000 years old. You have people who aren't necessarily that comfortable under the yoke of one country. So as we try to force them in together and try to have them dominate, what you find in a lot of these areas is that you end up having a strongman, and the strongman rules with an iron fist. This was Saddam Hussein.

The interesting thing about world politics and balance of power is, when we went in and toppled Saddam Hussein—let freedom ring—we actually made it more difficult for us in the world, and we made the Middle East more unstable because Iran and Iraq fought a fierce 8-year bloody war. They had come to somewhat of a standstill. Saddam Hussein, for all his warts, was somewhat of a counterbalance to Iran. So when Iraq was toppled and Saddam Hussein was gone, you once again have a power vacuum. In a power vacuum, al-Qaida will fill it and did. You upset the balance of power between Iran and Iraq, and now Iran seems to be more threatening throughout the region.

As we look at our spending, without question, there is part of the spending that isn't in this bill—the mandatory spending. For those who say: Oh, we are not going to do anything for the part of the bill we are actually voting on, and we are OK with the trillion-dollar deficit, I think there is sort of a litmus test. It is a litmus test of hypocrisy. If they were against trillion-dollar deficits for President Obama, why is it OK to have a Republican deficit of a trillion dollars? There is no escaping the hypocrisy of that.

I think there is also no escaping the dire warnings we heard. Almost all of the Republicans—I venture to say every Republican in the Senate—has made dire warnings about the debt, which was critical of President Obama. I was one of them, but we need to be honest enough to look in the mirror at ourselves when we are in charge of all three branches of government.

When the Republicans took over the House, they said: Well, don't have too high expectations. We only control one-half of one-third of the government. Then we took over the Senate, and they said: Well, we still can't do anything because President Obama is there. Now, we have a Republican

President. I don't know what the excuse is going to be. Some say: Well, we must govern. If by govern, they mean act like the other side and run up huge deficits, I guess it is not what I am interested in as far as governing.

Governing is about making tough choices. I think what has happened in our country—because we basically have a printing press, a Federal Reserve that replenishes and pays our debt, buys our debt simply by creating money and buying Treasury bills with it or Treasury bonds—is that we have sort of a limitless notion of debt. That is what has been going on. We keep adding to it.

To a large extent, we haven't had a catastrophe. I think we were close in 2008. Some of that is related to accumulation of debt. I think you also will see some of that in the near future. There is an unsettling notion out there—the stock market, having risen so far, so fast, you are seeing this jittery notion out there.

There is the worry about interest rates. There is the worry that historically we funded this massive debt at about 2 percent interest. What happens if we get back to more normalized rates of interest? I think this is an important debate. It is important to get also back to the crux of the debate.

What I have been arguing for tonight is that we have amendments. The most important job the Congress does is to pass spending bills. It is the most important thing we do, and the most important oversight we have. If we are to do that oversight, we should have a debate. We should have amendments.

What we are looking at is a bill that was decided in secret—700 pages that were printed last night at midnight—and, for the most part, it has not been read. It is very easy not to have a full understanding of a bill that is nearly 700 pages that comes forward, but within the midst of this, we know a couple of things.

We have gotten rid of fiscal responsibility. There were spending caps put in place to try to control spending. For a couple of years—2011, 2012, 2013—we were actually seeing a slowdown on the rate of growth of spending. You heard everybody squawking about this sequester. The sequester is so bad. The interesting thing about sequester is it wasn't a cut in spending. It was a slowdown of the rate of spending, a slowdown of the rate of growth of spending. If you look at curves over a long period of time—actually the rate of growth—you still had government growing, but we slowed down the rate of growth. As revenue was picking up, we actually were whittling away, at least a little bit, at the annual deficit.

Then the cries came that were, actually, mostly from my side. They said the military is being hollowed out. We have to have more military money. The dirty little secret around here is you can only get more military money if you give the other side more welfare money. We have warfare and welfare.

That is guns and butter. It has been going on a long time. We spent a lot of money, and both sides have now agreed to do this. The leadership has agreed to do this.

In this spending bill, what you are going to have is a looting of the Treasury, basically. Both sides are really culpable. Both sides are somewhat equally responsible for this bill and for the debt that will ensue.

The real question has to be—I think most importantly for my side—if you were against President Obama's trillion-dollar deficits, why are you for trillion-dollar deficits when you put a Republican name on it? I think people are going to see through this. You are already seeing some of the clips in the media putting forward the comments from 2010 and 2011 about President Obama's debt. These are comments coming from Republicans who are now for this bill. As they say in some parts of the country, you have some explaining to do.

That is the question. Are people going to look at this and say: My goodness, is everybody out there just a partisan politician and all they care about is party; and that the debt is bad when it is a Democratic debt and not bad when it is a Republican debt? That is sort of what we are facing.

My recommendation is that we really look long and hard at this. Most of the Senators will say: This is the last one. I am never voting for this again. These are terrible. This is a rotten way to run your government. I object to doing it this way. I will vote for this one because I don't want the government to shut down.

I don't want the government to shut down. I also don't want to keep it open if we are not going to reform it. It is damned if you do; damned if you don't. We could have done better. We could have moved forward with a responsible spending package that had amendments that we could all offer on the floor—an open amendment process and debate. We chose not to go that way. That is why we are here.

Some will say: You are responsible for this. It is all your fault. If I am responsible for drawing attention to the debt, so be it. Somebody has to do it. I didn't come up here to be part of somebody's club. I didn't come up here to be liked. I didn't come up here to just say: Hey, guys, I want to be part of the club so I am going to always vote with whatever you tell me to do. I have often voted with Democrats. I have often voted with Republicans. I probably have two dozen bills I cosponsored with Democrats. I am also seen as one of the most conservative Members of the Senate. I think there is a way you can have bipartisanship.

Bipartisanship doesn't mean you have to give up on everything you believe in. That is what this spending bill is. It is a bipartisan spending bill that gives up on everything that Republicans ostensibly believe in as far as deficit, debt, and spending. I will vote against this bill.

I will continue to advocate. If they want to vote earlier, they can vote earlier, as long as I get a vote on an amendment where we would have an open debate and an explicit vote that says: Are you for or against breaking the spending caps that we put in place?

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I was talking with the pages earlier asking if they knew what was going on. I am not sure if people watching the debate know what is going on. Let's talk about the mechanics of what is happening right now.

We have a measure before the Senate right now that cures at 1 a.m. tonight. At 1 a.m. tonight, we are going to vote on something we could vote on right now. The outcome is going to be something my friend from Kentucky will oppose, but it is going to happen because the majority of Republicans believe that funding the government is a pretty important thing to do.

I am in a club. I am in a club that says we need to keep the government open. I am in a club that says we don't need to be telling people they are going to be furloughed tomorrow when we know darn well that at 1 a.m. tonight, we will be back open for business. I am in a club that tells everybody we obligated ourselves to pay our bills, and we are going to pay our bills.

I don't like this. I served as speaker of the house for 4 years. We paid our bills on time and got our budgets done on time. We had regular order. I agree with all that stuff.

Right now, we are in a position to where this is very simple. We can, right now, provide certainty to the thousands of people who expect the government to be open or we can play this game until 1 a.m. I, for one, think we should do it right now. If we want to go through the theater, and we want to go until 1 a.m., that is going to be the end result.

Employees out there, I apologize on behalf of people who can't give you certainty right now at 9 p.m. At 1 a.m., you will have it. I am sorry we have to go through this process. We seem to go through it far too often.

I will also tell you something else I have to speak briefly on, and I am going to offer a motion.

This whole idea about this concept of let's just withdraw from Afghanistan—I have been to Baghdad. I have been to the Kurdish region in Iraq, and I have been to Afghanistan. I have heard people in Iraq say the worst thing we did was a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq. We can debate whether we should have gone in there, but we are in there, and now we have to figure out a way to exit that doesn't put Iraqis at risk and American men and women who are serving this country. You don't do it through a precipitous withdrawal. It is irresponsible, and I will guarantee you, there is not a single person in uniform who would agree with you that is the

right way to protect our troops and protect the people of Afghanistan and the many allies we have there trying to take the fight to the Taliban and al-Qaida. It is irresponsible. So I am a member of that club.

I am a member of a club that says when the United States said we are going to protect a country and try to get it on the right path, we stay there until we get it done and do everything we can while there to keep our men and women safe. If that is the wrong club to be in, so be it. I happen to think it is the club that every single one of us should be in.

This is not the sort of discussion we should be having tonight. Tonight is about funding the government. Tonight is about actually having a great discussion about regular order, getting appropriations bills on the floor, having a debate like we are going to have on immigration next week—but now is not the time to have this discussion.

We have to decide, what do you want to be as a Senator? Do you want to be a Senator who wants to make a point or do you want to make a difference? Do you know what? I don't see how points alone make a change in America. What makes a change in America is when we ratify a bill or get a bill out of here, we send it to the President, and it becomes law. If all we do is a speech on the floor, and it doesn't produce an outcome, time after time, then you may want to rethink how you are trying to get your point across.

What happens when you don't produce an outcome here? You haven't convinced 50 or 51 Senators your idea is good enough to support. Go to work. Build a coalition. Make a difference. You can make a point all you want. Points are forgotten. There are not a whole lot of history books about the great points of the American Senate. There are history books about the great results of the American Senate—the great bills, like the tax reform bill, and the other things we have done in this session but not points.

People aren't here to talk about a good point. They are here to talk about a good outcome. How do good outcomes happen? When we take votes like the vote we should be taking at 9 p.m. tonight. We may take it at 1 a.m. I am a night person. I am all right with that, but we should be taking it now.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 9 p.m. today, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the question is often asked, if not now, when? We have all been told: Now, Senator, is not the

time to discuss this. If we can do this through the committee in an orderly fashion, there is always going to be a better day. But the day never comes.

The vast majority of the Senators will admit that the way we do our budgeting and the way we do our spending around here is abominable. It is an abomination. Most people are opposed to it. Yet they come to the floor and say: Let's just keep doing it the way we have always done it. So until a majority of us will say no, enough is enough, it will continue to be the same thing.

The promise of making it different in the future is somewhat of an illusion or a false promise that just never gets here. There have been four times in 41 years that we did the right thing, that we did the appropriations bills—four times in 41 years.

So what I am proposing—and this actually would have been nice to vote on tonight—people come to the floor and say they want to vote, but they don't want to vote on anything they don't agree with. They don't want to have any kind of an open amendment process where we can have votes. I am interested in putting forward something that is called the Government Shutdown Prevention Act. This is legislation I have put forward that says that if, after a year of being able to put forward your appropriations bills, you haven't done your job, then the spending point will go down by 1 percent.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, again, I have the motion before us. I believe the Senator from Kentucky did object to the motion.

Just one brief comment. And I thank the Senator from Louisiana for presiding. I know I was supposed to be in the chair 30 minutes ago, and I will be there in a couple of minutes.

I also wanted to take a moment to talk about the great opportunity we have next week to pass immigration reform, the great opportunity that we have to fulfill the promise to the DACA population of some 1.8 million that the President has proposed to provide a path to citizenship. It is a proposal that has \$25 billion allocated over 10 years, with maybe \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion appropriated in the bill that we will take up or in various amendments that we will take up next week.

The first pillar is DACA, and we have satisfied that, and I believe we have broad consensus. There may be a few things around the edges, but we are pretty close to done.

On border security, we are done because the President himself has said it is not a monolithic wall over 2,300 miles. It is not even a wall over half that territory. It is about maybe 1,000

miles. And 1,000 miles of wall includes some walls that are secondary. So when you see a mile-long wall, it is actually two walls because there is a secondary barrier.

We are also talking about technology and infrastructure so that we can start working on the opioid epidemic. Tons and tons, millions of doses of heroin, fentanyl, and other drugs come across our border every month. By implementing border security—a lot of people think this is just about preventing people from crossing the border. This is about securing our Nation. Fortunately, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle recognize that.

Some think that the proposal—many of them; I don't know that all of them do—many of them believe the Department of Homeland Security and the Border Patrol have put together a great strategy that makes sense. I have always said—I got criticized last year—I said there is no way we are going to build a wall. We don't need a wall across all 2,300 miles, but we need security. We need it so that we know what is coming into this country, whether they are people crossing the border illegally or whether they are pumping hundreds and hundreds and millions of doses of poison into the thousands of people who die every year from opioids. In my State of North Carolina, more people die from opioid overdoses every year than interstate accidents—over 1,400.

So I am glad to know that pillar one—a path to citizenship for some 1.8 million DACA recipients—has an opportunity to become law, to make that difference I was talking about, and then \$25 billion to secure the border.

Now we are having a great discussion about what is called the diversity lottery. It involves about 50,000 visas every year that are allocated in a random way today that makes no sense. We want to do it in a way that actually makes sure that underrepresented countries have an opportunity to come here, maybe some 15,000 a year, many from Sub-Saharan Africa, and the other ones can be used to draw down a backlog of people who have been trying to get to this country for as long as 17 years.

We talk about how we want more people immigrating, but the reality is, if you get in line today through the legal process, it can take you 10 to 17 years to get through the process. We are trying to figure out a way, through that allocation of the diversity lottery, to make that half the time. So we can clear out the queue for people waiting for 17 years, and others in the queue will never have to wait that long—about 9 years in total. I think we are making great progress.

The last thing we have to work on is chain migration or family reunification. Today, about 72 percent of the 1 million to 1.1 million people who come to this country every year are through what they call a family petition. So there are people who may have some

relationship here—it could be a brother, a sister, a mother, or a father. That is important to do, but it is also important for us to take a look at what our economy needs, what America needs, to make sure we have the resources and the people who best provide a great platform for the Americans whom we have to fight for—for all of the Americans whom we have to fight hard for in this country.

So there would be simple provisions, such as if you have an advanced degree—maybe we should allocate some of what is going into purely family reunification into getting engineers, doctors, scientists, highly educated people who want to come to live in this country.

At the other end of the spectrum, we need people of various skills, with a community college certification, maybe—a welder, a technical drawer. There are a number of things you can get at a community college. I know this because I went to a community college—actually two of them. There are a number of skills that you get over 2 years that you may have gained in a foreign country, or you may want to come here and complete the degree and then stay here.

That is all we are talking about in terms of adding a merit component to what right now is purely random or purely family-based immigration. I think there is a way to bridge that gap. I know people are kind of drawing their swords on certain issues, but let's look at what we are trying to do: No. 1, promote immigration to this country; and No. 2, make sure that it is very much focused on the kinds of needs we have in this Nation to help the economy grow.

By the way, if the economy is growing, there is going to be a lot of resources and people to support that growing economy. So I think that at the end of the day, if we do this, it could have the effect of actually promoting a case for more legal immigration over time.

I want to thank Senator DURBIN and Senator GRAHAM and a number of people who have spent years trying to solve this problem. By the same token, I would tell them, you have spent years trying to solve the problem with a single solution, and it hasn't worked. It hasn't worked in a Republican administration, and it didn't work when President Obama was in power. It didn't even work when you didn't need a single Republican to vote for comprehensive immigration reform.

There was a time here—because no Republican voted for ObamaCare, so there was clearly a time here that the table should have been set for whatever immigration solution you wanted, in the same way the table was set for whatever healthcare solution President Obama wanted. I don't begrudge him for taking advantage of the opportunity, whether or not I disagree with the policy. But it is very telling, if that solution, which started back in 2001,

couldn't make it through a sympathetic Republican President's administration, if that legislation couldn't make it through after 2008, with President Obama's clearly sympathetic administration, why on Earth would we simply propose the same thing that has failed for 17 years when we are so close to coming up with something that is balanced and compassionate?

I have had all kinds of people mad at me because I support a path to immigration for 1.8 million people. I wear that as a badge of honor because it is the right thing to do. It is also the right thing to do to secure the border, to fix the visa lottery, and to work on migration here that still maintains roughly the same numbers but does it in a responsible way that also protects the interests of the American people, the people who are here today, and creates a better environment for the people who want to move here tomorrow.

I thank the Presiding Officer for standing in my place for a moment.

I will yield the floor and come to the Chair.

(Mr. TILLIS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 9:30 p.m. today, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

I think it is interesting, as we follow the debate this evening, and people watching at home may be interested because it kind of turns on some inside baseball things, and you are not sure what to know or believe.

One side says they are ready to vote, and the other side says we are ready to vote. That is the way it has kind of been, except for one side wants to vote only on what they want to vote on and they have agreed to beforehand. The other side wants an open debate, where we would have amendments. That is the side I am on.

I have been arguing all day, basically, to have open amendments, and I want to do an amendment that would say that, basically, we should obey the spending limits. Instead of having a \$1 trillion debt, we should obey our spending limits.

So it is about open debate. It is about voting. I am all in favor of voting, I am in favor of voting right now, and I have offered the other side a 15-minute vote on containing or retaining the spending caps.

So I object because I think there should be amendments, and there

should be sufficient debate on this subject.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 10:30 p.m. this evening, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think it is very important that the American people know why we are here this evening, and why we are here is because Washington is completely broken.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, regular order.

Mr. PAUL. We are spending money like it is out of control. This bill will have a trillion-dollar deficit, as bad or worse than any of President Obama's. So what I ask my Republican colleagues is, Why are we doing this when we condemned it on the other side?

Mr. CORNYN. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11 p.m. this evening, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, I think it is interesting how much energy we are expending when we could have had a 15-minute vote on this, but nobody wanted to vote.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask for regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Regular order is called for.

Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11:30 p.m. this evening, the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, it seems like a lot of work for a trillion-dollar deficit.

Mr. CORNYN. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Regular order is called for.

Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 12 a.m., the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, a trillion-dollar Republican deficit—the hypocrisy is astounding. Every one of these Republicans complained about President Obama's deficits. Yet now we have them out there bragging and pushing and doing everything they can to get their trillion-dollar deficit through.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 12:30 a.m., the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Reserving the right to object, I realize this charade is about Republicans wanting a trillion-dollar deficit.

Mr. CORNYN. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Regular order is called for.

Is there an objection?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at 1 a.m., the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1892 with a further amendment; further, that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the motion to concur.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we are talking about a trillion-dollar deficit.

Mr. CORNYN. Regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Regular order is called for.

Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I have asked unanimous consent that the Senate be allowed to vote on the pending matter, and there have been multiple objections, of course, by the Senator from Kentucky.

I don't know why we are basically burning time here while the Senator from Kentucky and others are sitting in the cloakroom wasting everybody's time and inconveniencing the staff. We could easily move this matter forward and have a vote. The outcome will be exactly the same, and it is not inconsequential that the current continuing resolution, I believe, expires at midnight tonight.

So the Senator from Kentucky, by objecting to the unanimous consent requests, will effectively shut down the Federal Government for no real reason. I know he wants to make a point. He has that right. I agree with many of his concerns about deficits and debt, but we are in an emergency situation.

We have our military that is not ready to fight and win our Nation's wars the way it should be. We have military members who have died in accidents as a result of the lack of training and being stretched too thin because of budget cuts, and we need to fix that. General Mattis has pointed out that more American military members have died in training accidents and in regular operations than they have in combat. That is a tragedy that I would hope all of us would want to address.

Then, of course, there is the disaster relief that helps people who were victimized by Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Maria, the wildfires out West, and Hurricane Irma. That is an emergency matter, as well.

So I don't understand why the Senator from Kentucky wants to insist on shutting down the Federal Government when, after the time expires under the regular order, the outcome will be exactly the same.

I recognize that he has that right, and he has objected to all of my unanimous consent requests to move the vote up earlier, but it makes no sense to me. It will not accomplish anything. I just ask him to reconsider what he is doing in shutting down the entire Federal Government when the outcome of this vote will not be any different after the regular time expires than it would be if we had that vote starting at 10:30 tonight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I think it is interesting—the debate we are having, an important debate—and it is important to call attention to how we spend money in Washington and how the system is irrevocably broken. We can cast blame where we want to cast blame, but, I think, for the record, it is important to know that I have been offering all day to vote.

I would like nothing more than to vote, but it is the other side. It is the leadership that has refused to allow any amendments. So we have what is called a closed debate. There will be no amendments. There will be no questioning of the authority. The deal was made in secret, and the deal will not be debated on the floor, and there will be no amendments.

So what I am advocating for is, one, that we should reform the process. I don't advocate for shutting the government down, but neither do I advocate for keeping it open and borrowing \$1 million a minute. In fact, the statistics this year are closer to \$2 million a minute.

This is a government that is horribly broken. This is a system that is horribly broken, and Senator after Senator will come up quietly, and they will say: Oh, this is the last time I am voting for a continuing resolution. This is terrible. This is a terrible way to run a government. This is a rotten way to run the government. Yet they keep voting for it. They are in charge. Why have we been doing this for 40 years? Four times in 40 years have we actually done our job where we voted on each individual appropriations bill.

Earlier today, I went through some of the waste. It is amazing the waste that has been going on. William Proxmire was first pointing out this waste in 1968. One of the examples he pointed to was that money was being spent studying why men fall in love with women. You may be curious about that, too. If you are, ask your friends to get Crowdsourcing, and you could get a study of why men fall in love with women. That is not a function of government. That waste goes on decade after decade, and nothing is ever fixed.

What we have is a 700-page bill that will not have been read by anyone. I was just reading some of the things that will be stuck in there. Nobody will have any idea how they got in there—all of the spending glommed together in one bill with no oversight.

This is a terrible, rotten, no-good way to run your government, and it has been going on decade after decade. Everyone admits it is a terrible, rotten, no-good way to run your government. Yet nobody stands up and says enough is enough. They say: It is a binary choice, young man. Take it or leave it. I will leave it.

I don't want to shut down the government, but somebody ought to insist that we have an open amendment process. Someone should insist that we root out waste in government. We have had a partial audit of the Pentagon, and we

found out that \$800 million was misplaced or lost. What has been done so far in the audit showed over \$100 billion has been wasted in the Pentagon. So what do we do? We reward them with more money. We have been trying to get a complete audit of this Pentagon for 17 years, and you know what they argue? They say: We are too big to be audited. How galling is that, when your government tells you that we are too big to be audited?

This goes on decade after decade. Everybody in Washington complains about it. All the constituents complain about it. All of America complains about it. Yet we do it time after time. Then, people say: Well, look, this is a bipartisan deal. Kumbaya. Republicans and Democrats are holding hands to spend more money.

It is the opposite of what you want. You want compromise in Washington, but we should be compromising to spend less money, not more. Every one of the Republicans—count them; you can look it up on the internet—said that President Barack Obama was a spendthrift and he had trillion-dollar deficits, and we railed day in and day out, year in and year out against it, and rightfully so.

It was too much debt and too much spending. We were against that. That is what I ran for office on. I am not about to turn my head the other way and say it is fine because my party is doing it. That is what this is about. It is pure, empty, partisan politics, where people are saying: It is OK for Republicans to have debts, but it was bad for Democrats to have debts.

It is time we stood up and said it is a rotten system and it should end.

How will it end? It is never going to end by people always passing the buck and saying: Oh, I am voting; this is my last continuing resolution. I hate continuing resolutions. They are terrible. This is my last one, but I am going to vote for one more—maybe next year or actually in a month, because we will be doing this again in a month.

Do you realize that we are on our fourth continuing resolution? This has nothing to do with the budget, and the media confuses this. They say we have a budget deal. No, we have a continuing resolution deal. This is not a budget. This isn't some sort of plan. This hasn't gone through a committee. There are no appropriations bills that have gone through committee. There is no oversight happening to your government. So when I tell you that \$356,000 was spent last year studying what happens to Japanese quail when they are on cocaine—whether they are more sexually promiscuous on cocaine—this is what your government is spending money on. But it doesn't get any better because we never root out the waste. In fact, the agency that has been doing this research ends up getting more every year.

They are like: Oh, we like science. If you like science, you will like this one. They took \$700,000 from autism re-

search, and they spent it studying what Neil Armstrong said when he was on the moon. Did he say "one small step for man," or did he say "one small step for a man"? We spent \$700,000 studying whether the preposition "a" was in Neil Armstrong's statement. That is \$700,000 that should have been spent on autism.

This isn't really just about fiscal conservatism, although it is. It is about how best to spend money for legitimate expenses. Every time you spend money in a wasted way, you are taking away from something that presumably was less wasteful. So this is a big deal.

Do I want to shut down the government? No. But do I want to keep it open and not reform it? Hell, no. That is what is going on. It is a trillion-dollar deficit this year. It is going to be bigger, probably, but we were approaching a trillion dollars before they added \$300 billion of new spending to this. So this is a problem. This is a big deal.

I have said all day long that I will vote. Start the process. Open the doors. We could have had 40 amendments today. We have been at this all day, with the other side blocking amendments, trying to have no debate and trying to close the door so a secret deal—a deal done in secret—can be forced on everyone else.

So yes, we should have debate. Yes, we should have a vote. Let's have a vote tonight on amendments. Let's have amendments. Let's determine whether the American people or the Senate are really in favor of busting the caps.

I have one amendment. I am not asking for a dozen amendments. I am not asking for 100 amendments or 1,000 amendments. I am asking for one. It takes 15 minutes.

So realize that all day these people wanted to paint a picture. They are embarrassed, and I understand that. They are embarrassed by this situation because they know the hypocrisy is thicker than pea soup. They know the hypocrisy is out there. They railed and they railed against President Obama's debt—trillion-dollar deficits. Every one of them railed against it, and now they have to vote tonight for a trillion-dollar deficit. That is the problem here. So there is a certain embarrassment to bring this up. The embarrassment causes them to say: We don't want any amendments. We don't want to discuss this. They ought to be discussed, and so much more should be discussed.

It isn't just that we are blocking amendments or debate on spending or that we are not doing our job on appropriations bills. We are also not doing our constitutional duty on the declaration of war. This was something the Founding Fathers were explicit on. The power to declare war was given to Congress in article I, section 8—given to Congress. In fact, there is discussion of this. There was extensive discussion of this. Almost every Founding Father

weighed in on the fact that war should be declared by the legislature. Madison put it this way. He said that the executive branch is most prone to war; therefore, with steady care, that power was vested in the legislature.

When was the last time we declared war? Well, officially, we haven't declared war since World War II, but we have sort of voted. At least we came to Congress—at least George Bush came to Congress when we went to Afghanistan the first time and when we went to Iraq the first time, and there were votes. But those votes were long ago, nearly a generation ago. They really don't apply to anything we are doing now, and there is a certain intellectual dishonesty by those who continue to say that the vote to go into Afghanistan has anything to do with what we are doing over there now. There is no military solution there, and that also ties into our budgetary problems.

We do not have enough money to build nations around the world and think that we can build our Nation here at home. So when people talk about nation building, I say: Yes, you are right, but we need to do some nation building here.

The President has talked about a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, but there is no money for it. So we are borrowing \$1 trillion before we get started with people advocating for a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan. There is no money. If we want to find the money, we have to make difficult choices.

As people come to my office, they say: We want money for X; we want money for Y; we want money for Z. I listen carefully, I listen sympathetically, and I try to say: Look, we are a rich country. We ought to be able to do what you are asking. Yet we have a \$1 trillion deficit, and everything has to be reflected by the fact that we are out of money and horribly spending a great excess of what comes in. But nobody is making these difficult choices because we just keep adding on to the tab. We basically just borrow more money.

When President Obama was President, we were—under George W. Bush, we went from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion in total debt. With President Obama, we went from \$10 trillion to \$20 trillion. We are almost at that same curve again. In fact, we may be escalating that curve as we speak. As Republicans, we all criticized that enormous debt and said that it was a bad thing for our government. There was a debt commission, and there was all of this discussion and a lot of pandering. I was one of those who was concerned, and I am still concerned.

We have this debt that continues to escalate. Yet what do Republicans do when they are in charge? You remember the stories. If you were asked to help Republicans, they said: Well, we took over the House, but that will only—we control one-half of one-third of government. We can't get everything we want. So it didn't happen.

Then we took over the Senate. We controlled one-third of government, and they said: Well, we have to have the Presidency.

Then, lo and behold, we won the Presidency. We have all of the branches of government, yet we still are putting forward a spending bill that will be the equivalent of a \$1 trillion deficit.

Is it wrong to point that out? Is it wrong to want better of your own party? Is it wrong to think that we ought to do our job, that we ought to go into an appropriations process? The House actually did it. People say: Oh, we can't do that anymore. The House of Representatives passed all 12 appropriations bills. It can be done.

Actually, maybe it is not the panacea I would hope in the sense that there is still too much money being spent, even in the appropriations process. It really needs to go hand in hand with two things. We should still do the appropriations bill. There are 12 departments of government; let's pass them one at a time. But we should also keep in mind, as we are spending money or voting to spend money, that the Constitution limits very much what the Congress can do. There are enumerated powers given to Congress under article I, section 8. That is what we are supposed to do. This was a big deal to the Founding Fathers. In fact, they were very specific that those rights not listed were not to be disparaged, so the listing of the Bill of Rights was a partial listing of your rights. But they were also very careful to say that the powers that were granted to the Federal Government were a complete list, and anything not listed in the powers granted would be retained by the people and the States—by the States and the people, respectively.

Part of our problem is that we decided we wanted a government that is everything to everyone. You ask yourself: Is one party better than the other? Maybe at times. But, really—if you are looking for responsibility—they want to cast blame. All of a sudden, I, myself, am somehow responsible for the whole problem here. Actually, I have made them angry, and they are very upset with me because I have made it difficult. We are going to have to be up late tonight, and they are angry that I am pointing out their hypocrisy. That is a big problem, and nobody likes to have that pointed out. But if we don't, if we just continue on this course, I think there is a great danger to the Nation.

I think there is a day of reckoning coming, and I think that our debt eventually could get the better of us, that it could really threaten the underpinnings, the undergirding of our country, and it could do it in a couple of different ways.

For some time now, we have manipulated interest rates through the Federal Reserve. We kept them below the market rate, which led to a huge housing bubble and a housing correction. We don't really have a housing bubble

happening, but many of you may have noticed that there has been a huge stock market bubble. There is a question as to whether the fury of that has been fed by Fed policy and whether the desire to keep interest rates low to make it cheap to borrow money—whether someday we will have a boom that leads to a bust. I really think that is a worry.

The stock market has been very jittery in the last few days. I think some of that has to do—it is funny how people interpret it. Some on the left will say: Oh, the stock market is jittery because the government might shut down for 2 hours. That is the dumbest thing I have ever heard in my life. But it could be, perhaps, that they are jittery because we have a government that is profligate in its spending, is perpetually spending more than comes in, and has such a great imbalance that maybe one-third of what we are doing here is financed.

They say: Well, it would be one thing to actually finance a house or something like that, but if you are financing your rent or if you are financing your groceries each month, there is a problem. We are having trouble paying our day-to-day expenses because we are borrowing them.

Much has been said about the military needing money, and I believe in a strong national defense. In fact, I believe that our national defense is actually the most important thing the Federal Government does. It is one of those things that State government can't do. So, yes, I want a strong national defense, but you have to ask yourself whether a \$20 trillion debt makes us a stronger country or a weaker country.

I think it was Admiral Milligan who said that, currently, the No. 1 threat to our country is our national debt. There is this question of whether an insolvent nation can be a strong nation.

As we look through this, I think it would be wise to look at the spending bill and say: This is not the way we should run a government, and we, as Republicans—if we really, truly are conservative—should be putting forward something that looks toward balance, at the very least, instead of going the opposite way.

I would ask the Senate to really take a look at themselves, to look in the mirror and say: Is this really what we stand for? Is this what we have been running for all these years, to control government and then be no different from our counterparts across the aisle?

I think today is a day of reflection but hopefully a day where there will be some who will say: Enough is enough. I am not going to do it anymore.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, we find ourselves in another position like those we have found ourselves in before. We find ourselves in a position in which the government's spending authority is set to expire in just a few hours. We have

known this was coming for weeks, just as we did with the last continuing resolution and the one before that and the one before that. As Jacques Cousteau once observed: "We are living in an interminable succession of absurdities imposed by the myopic logic of short-term thinking."

Every time, we approach this as if it were somehow going to be different this time. We quibble from time to time about this or that policy. We quibble from time to time about the price tag. Sometimes we are so focused on the policy and the price tag that we forget about the process. It is primarily to this subject, the process, that I would like to turn my attention for the next few minutes.

You see, the process is important around here. We come from different backgrounds. We come from different States. We represent diverse interests across this great country. We are not going to agree on everything. In fact, there are a lot of things on which we strongly disagree. That is why we have processes.

The Constitution is, itself, all about the process. In fact, the Constitution is more or less agnostic as to the substantive policy outcome. It is all about connecting the American people to their government, which is there to serve them. It is all about making sure that there is responsiveness and accountability from the government to the people, making sure that the government serves the people and not the other way around.

It is for this reason—and it is very important—that each Member who holds an election certificate in this body or in the body just down the hall from us in the House of Representatives is allowed to express his or her opinions and have them matter. Nowhere is this more important than when it comes to spending bills.

You see, it is in spending bills that we have the opportunity to exercise oversight over the Federal Government—a government that requires the American people to spend many months out of every year working just to pay their tax bills, a Federal Government that imposes \$2 trillion every single year in regulatory compliance costs on the American people, a government that has the power to destroy a business or a livelihood or, in some cases, lives.

It is important that we exercise this oversight, and without spending constraints, there can be no meaningful oversight. Without an adequate process, the Republican form of government cannot fulfill its role. The American people are no longer in charge of their government when this happens.

For this reason, it is a little disturbing that a government that spends nearly \$4 trillion every single year makes its spending decisions in one fell swoop as it does. You see, whenever we pass a continuing resolution, what we are doing as a Congress is effectively pressing a reset button. It keeps current spending levels intact, in place,

unchanged, as if there were no reviewing body, as if there had been no election, as if the American people didn't matter at all to the process by which they are governed. This is an abdication of our role as the people's elected representatives. It disconnects the American people, and we wonder—we wonder why it is that this is an institution, Congress, that enjoys an approval rating somewhere between 9 and 14 percent, making us slightly less popular than Fidel and Raul Castro in America and only slightly more popular than the influenza virus, which is rapidly gaining on us. It is for this reason—because we have disconnected the American people from their own government, and one of the ways we do that is when we pass a continuing resolution to keep the government funded at current levels without any additional changes. When these things are offered, it is often within just hours of the expiration of a spending deadline.

We have a bill before us that is quite lengthy and that we have had access to for only about 24 hours—a little bit less than that—and we are asked to make a binary choice as to that legislation, yes or no. Vote for it and, in this case, there are some things that you get. You get \$90 billion in emergency spending. You get an increase of spending caps of about \$300 billion over 2 years. You get in excess of \$1 trillion in new debt. Some have estimated it could be more like \$1.5 trillion, but we will be talking about a \$22 trillion debt by the second quarter of 2019 as a result of this bill.

When we received this bill, we were told: You have two options. You can vote yes and accept all of those things or you can vote no, and there is no opportunity for anything in between there—no opportunity to amend it, no opportunity to improve it. If you think about it, there is really not a meaningful opportunity for debate if you don't have a meaningful opportunity to amend a legislative provision once it is introduced.

Members are told over and over and over again: You are either going to vote for this and accept the government as is, with no changes or with changes that you might find incredibly disturbing, or you will be blamed for a shutdown. Why is this OK?

One of the things that we hear from the American people, quite understandably, quite justifiably, is why can't you all just get into a room and come to an agreement? Well, this is that room. There are two such rooms here in the Capitol. One is in the Senate, and one is in the House of Representatives. This is the room where that is supposed to take place. There are mechanisms by which that is supposed to occur. Through the amendment process, people offer up legislation, and they offer to improve legislation. If they have concerns with it, they can offer up amendments. When Members are denied that opportunity, the American people are disconnected yet again from that process.

Who benefits from this? Well, it certainly isn't the American people, who find that their government gets bigger and more expensive. It does so at their expense, at the expense of the American people. Every time we undertake this process again—we pass another continuing resolution—we suggest that it is somehow OK to fund the government this way, with one decision affecting every aspect of government, in one vote put forward under sort of extortive circumstances in which Members are told: You have to do this, or the government is going to shut down, and you will be blamed for that if you vote against it.

This isn't right. Why couldn't we bring legislation to the floor not hours but weeks or even months before the deadline? Why couldn't we allow that to occur, to allow the debate, the discussion to occur under the light of day rather than having this legislation negotiated under cover of darkness, behind closed doors, where the American people are left out.

I have thought about this on many occasions, and there are very few circumstances in our day-to-day lives that are like the way Congress spends money.

It has occurred to me that it is as if you moved into a new area, a very remote area, and you had access to only one grocery store for many, many miles, many, many hours away. You were on your way home from work and your spouse called you and said to stop at the store and pick up bread, milk, and eggs.

You go to the store and get your grocery cart. You go to the bread aisle and put a loaf of bread, a carton of milk, and a dozen eggs in your cart. You get to the checkout counter, and you put out your bread, milk, and eggs. The cashier rings those things up and says: I am sorry, you may not purchase bread, milk, and eggs unless you also purchase half a ton of iron ore, a bucket of nails, a book about cowboy poetry, and a Barry Manilow album. In fact, this is a special kind of store where you have to buy all of those things. In fact, you have to buy one of every item in this entire store in order to buy any of these things, including the bread, the milk, and the eggs.

That would start to approximate what it feels like to spend money in Congress, where we are told: You can't fund any part of government unless you are willing to fund all of government, subject to such changes as the few people who write the continuing resolution might insert. And you, by the way, having been duly elected by the citizens of your State, will be left out of the process other than to exercise the binary choice of yes or no.

So we have seen that this is how we get to be \$20 trillion in debt, soon to be \$22 trillion in debt. We don't get to be \$21 trillion, soon to be \$22 trillion in debt without a whole lot of agreement on the part of a whole lot of people to do that. It is a bipartisan exercise, to

be sure. Bipartisanship is necessary, but the fact that it is bipartisan doesn't always make it holy.

You don't get to be \$20 trillion in debt without a whole lot of Republicans agreeing with a whole lot of Democrats that we are going to do precisely that. It might inure to the benefit of a few people who stand to benefit every time the government gets bigger or more expensive, every time we do things this way, but it hurts everyone else.

So process matters. The fact is, we will not always come to an agreement as to how much we ought to spend. We will not always come to an agreement as to those things on which we will be spending, the requisite amount of money. But I think we should be able to agree that the American people deserve a process, one that allows them to be heard through the people's own elected representatives. If not us, who? If not now, when? At what point are we going to start appropriating funds through this government, through a process that is open, that is transparent, that can be observed by the American people and through which the American people can be heard?

At the end of the day, we must remember that we are great as a country not because of who we are but because of what we do. To the extent that we have recognized as a nation that the dignity of the human soul matters, that the rights of the individual have to be taken into account, and that the government works for the people, we have prospered and will prosper in the future. But we have to be willing to respect the American people, and we should not be surprised—when we ignore them over and over again and when we shut them out of a process that directly and materially impacts their lives, we should not be shocked when they respond with horror. We shouldn't be surprised when wave election after wave election signals dissatisfaction with this very body, with this very entity that serves as the legislative branch of our Federal Government.

Each time we are presented with one of these continuing resolutions or with a one-size-fits-all spending package where we are told that we have to either vote for it, all of it, with no opportunity to improve it, or we have to vote against it, I have concerns with that.

I have significant concerns with this particular legislation, and I will vote no.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I came in the Chamber just in the middle of a couple of these statements that have been made, and I was confused because I thought we were talking about the tax bill, the bill that went through the Senate in December with no hearings and no amendments. It didn't even have a fig leaf of bipartisanship. I am

puzzled regarding my two colleagues, who seem so worried about the deficit, both of whom I believe voted for that bill, which, according to the Congressional Budget Office, is going to add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit.

There are two issues; one is process, and one is results. I myself am concerned about results. I am concerned about the deficit, and I think it is a legitimate question, but it ill-behoves one who, less than 6 weeks ago, voted for a massive, unfunded tax cut that will increase our deficit by well over \$1 trillion. So it is OK as a matter of deficit politics to be for that bill and against a bill that funds community health centers in my State; that funds opioid treatment, which is desperately needed across this country; that funds our military in a way that they can operate and actually meet the needs of the national security of this country. That is what the bill before us does.

So we can argue about those things, but it is touching, frankly, to hear these very lugubrious comments about process when the process on the tax bill was one of the worst processes in the history of this body. When tax reform was passed in 1986, there were some 33 hearings before the Finance Committee. It took 14 months, and the vote in the Senate was something like 90 to 10. That was a process. The process on the tax bill in December was atrocious. It was an embarrassment. The city council in Bangor, ME, would not have amended the leash law using that process.

Now, tonight, people are coming and complaining about process—the people who voted for that bill. I am sorry, I am not very persuaded by that. At least now there has been some process in the sense that it has been bipartisan, that our leaders have been able to negotiate, that there has been input from the Appropriations Committee, from Members of the rank-and-file on both sides and in both Houses. I admit it is not a great process, but it seems to me those who are raising that issue tonight forfeited the right to raise that issue when they voted for the tax bill, as far as I know, without a peep about process or about deficits.

I agree that we ought to get back to regular order. We ought to get back to working together. We ought to get back to committee hearings. But let's not have this amnesia from 6 weeks ago when we made one of the most significant decisions—a once-in-a-generation decision—about permanent tax policy that is going to affect the budget and the debt of this country for a whole generation.

Here, tonight, we are getting all of this strong emotional plea about process, about what amounts to a 2-year budget, which, by the way, is the way we should do it—not according to this process, but we ought to be talking about 2-year budgets.

So I am sympathetic on both the deficit issue and the process issue, but the lawyer in me says that you are es-

topped from raising that argument if you voted for the tax bill. You can't have it both ways.

I listened to my esteemed colleague from Utah, and I understand his concerns. I share his concerns. If only he had said that in December. But, instead, he says it tonight when we are talking about funding our military, opioid treatment, and children's healthcare.

I think you have to work it both ways. You can't just take one side of the debate and say that it is OK to do a tax cut with no process but it is not OK to take a bipartisan, negotiated arrangement on the budget because all of a sudden we are concerned about process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I appreciate the keen insights of my friend and distinguished colleague, the Senator from Maine.

I would point out here that there was a process on the tax bill. It may not have been perfect—in fact, it wasn't—but there was a process. We had amendments. We were allowed to offer them, to have them considered. We did, in fact, take votes. There is no process on this.

I have been told by some of the Members of this body—some from my party, some from the other party—that there is a process because members of the Appropriations Committee have had input on this. That isn't a process that belongs to the Senate; that is for one committee. It is not a substitute for floor consideration.

There is a provision in the U.S. Constitution that makes certain kinds of amendments to the Constitution patently unconstitutional. That provision says that you can't do anything to alter the equal representation of the States within the U.S. Senate. Consistent with the spirit of that provision, we have to make sure we don't make changes to Senate procedure in a way that creates a super class of Senators. We don't want to get to a point, to paraphrase George Orwell, where we say all Senators are equal but some are more equal than others.

The process within the Appropriations Committee is not Senate process.

We did, in fact, have a process on the tax bill. It was not perfect, but it was a process. Here, there isn't a process. Here, there is not an opportunity for amendments. There is not an opportunity for a single amendment. That is a material distinction, and it is one worth noting here.

It is also worth noting here that we have done this over and over and over again. What is this—the fifth continuing resolution of this fiscal year alone? This is happening over and over and over again, so much so that many Members of this body have never seen it operate any differently. That is a sad state of affairs and one that ought to be troubling to Members of both polit-

ical parties and to Members of this body from every part of this great country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

MORNING BUSINESS

REMEMBERING JON HUNTSMAN, SR.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of Jon Huntsman, Sr., a committed public servant, a visionary entrepreneur, and perhaps the greatest philanthropist Utah has ever known. Jon passed away peacefully last Friday afternoon with his friends and family gathered by his bedside. Elaine and I will miss him dearly, as will thousands in Utah and across the Nation.

From humble beginnings, Jon rose to the highest echelons of industry and power. But along life's journey, he never lost sight of what matters most. Indeed, no matter what success Jon experienced, no matter what wealth he attained or honors he achieved, he always maintained an everyman ethos that endeared him to friends and business associates alike.

Jon's hallmark humility was born of a childhood spent in poverty. Growing up in modest circumstances, Jon resolved to escape the financial hardships of his youth and find success as a businessman. In time, he made a tremendous fortune as the chairman and CEO of the Huntsman group of companies, which includes Huntsman Chemical Corp. Rather than sit on his wealth, Jon gave liberally to all, donating more than \$1 billion over the course of his lifetime to build and sustain hundreds of charities, the most prominent of which was the Huntsman Cancer Institute—a premiere research facility dedicated to eradicating cancer in all its forms. With a donation of \$450 million, Jon and his wife, Karen, founded the institute in 1995. Today, it remains among the most respected medical research facilities in the world. For Jon, the battle against cancer was personal; he himself was a four-time cancer survivor, and his own mother passed away from the disease. With the sheer amount of resources he has devoted to cancer research, Jon has done more than perhaps anyone alive to help us find a cure.

Of course, fighting cancer was not Jon's only cause. He also donated hundreds of millions of dollars to strengthen schools, feed the hungry, and protect women and children from abuse. For Jon, material success was never an end in itself but a means to enrich the lives of others. Richly was he given, and richly did he give to all who stood in need. He was magnanimous to the very end and will long be remembered for his selflessness towards his fellow man.

Jon was also actively involved in public life, serving as an Associate Administrator of the Department of