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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 12 p.m.

Senate

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 2019

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SUSAN M. COLLINS, a Senator from the State of Maine.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are holy, the only God, and Your deeds sustain us. Because of You, we live and move and breathe and have our being.

Lord, remind our lawmakers of the wisdom of Proverbs 22:3: "A prudent person foresees the danger ahead and takes precautions; the simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." Lord, may our lawmakers be prudent people, seeing the danger from afar and preparing to meet it. Grant our Senators wisdom and courage for the living of these challenging times.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 19, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SUSAN COLLINS, a Senator from the State of Maine, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. COLLINS thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST ACT OF 2019—Motion to Proceed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 1, a bill to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriation of funds

to Israel, to reauthorize the United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015, and to halt the wholesale slaughter of the Syrian people, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Virginia or his designee will control 2 hours of debate.

The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. KAINES. Madam President, in the last 2 days, I have stood on this floor and asked that the American Government reopen. On Thursday, I asked unanimous consent to proceed to the bipartisan House bill funding most shuttered government Agencies through the end of this fiscal year. The majority leader objected to my request.

Yesterday, I asked unanimous consent to proceed to the bipartisan House bill funding Homeland Security Agencies through February 8. The junior Senator from Oklahoma, on behalf of the majority leader, objected to my request.

So today marks the 29th day of the government shutdown—29 days of fiscal pain and mental anxiety and national humiliation; 29 days of families worried about mortgage payments, canceling medical appointments, losing their place at a favored daycare that they can no longer afford to pay for; 29 days of being required to travel to work without being paid and without even receiving money to put gas in your car to get to work; 29 days of being unable to add your newborn child to your Federal health insurance policy; 29 days of being turned away from

- This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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services like food stamps or National Parks or affordable housing programs or domestic violence services; 29 days of chemical spills not being investigated or food products not being inspected; 29 days of our veterans who serve as Federal employees or Federal contractors suffering as political pawns in an unnecessary stunt; 29 days of seeing the country you love cease to be an example to others.

If a foreign adversary—if a foreign adversary—through an active attack or cyber attack disabled major portions of the American Government pushing 800,000 Federal employees to the brink of financial disaster and blocking millions of Americans from accessing government services critical to their lives—if a foreign adversary did that, make no mistake, we would consider it an act of war.

If a foreign adversary figured out a way to block border guards, U.S. marshals, Coast Guard members, DEA agents, ATF agents, FBI agents, TSA agents, and air traffic controllers from being paid to intentionally hurt those whom we charge with protecting our safety and security, we would consider it an attack on our country.

If a foreign adversary took these steps to embarrass and humiliate us, to bring much of the Nation to a halt, to divide us against one another, we would consider it an attack on our country.

But these acts are not being conducted by a foreign adversary. They are being intentionally waged against American workers and American citizens by the President of the United States. He advertised in December that he would shut down the government and gladly own the responsibility for it. He has claimed pride—pride—in what he has done and suggested that he might keep government shut down for weeks or months. It is this President who is waging this attack against broad swaths of the American public.

I think you are aware of this: I have long criticized the tendency of Congress to allow Presidents of either party to wage war without requiring congressional approval. I criticized President Obama for unilateral military action in Libya, Iraq, and Syria, and I have criticized President Trump for unilateral military action in Syria and Yemen. But I have reserved my toughest criticisms in this matter for Congress. How can we be silent when a President chooses to initiate war, sending our troops into harm's way, without a congressional vote? How can we be silent when the President takes such an action without a congressional vote?

Today, I am critical of this Senate—a body I love, with 99 other colleagues I love. I am critical of this Senate for allowing this President to wage this attack against American workers and citizens without being willing to hold a vote about it.

Just a few weeks ago, this body was very willing to vote for funding the

very Agencies that are shuttered today. Democratic and Republican Members decided that such a vote was in the interest of their country, their own States, and their own constituents. But following the vote, the President expressed his disappointment in the vote, so the vast majority of colleagues in the majority, with notable exceptions, obviously have changed their position from December and are now unwilling to vote.

The House bills that are pending at the desk would reopen government, and I find it truly outrageous that the majority is not yet willing to hold a vote on those bills. Just as Congress abdicates its clear responsibility constitutionally by refusing to hold a vote on the initiation of war, I believe that the Senate is now abdicating its clear responsibility to appropriate funds for government by refusing to even entertain a vote on the bipartisan spending bills that are before us.

Let's be clear about this. If we were to proceed to those bills, every Member in this Chamber would be required to vote either for or against government funding in the previously agreed amounts. We all would be held accountable for either voting for funding or against funding. It is this accountability—or, rather, the fear of being held accountable—for a vote that is blocking consideration of these bills.

The majority—again, with notable exceptions, including the Presiding Officer and another Senator who will be here today—are afraid to vote. If they vote for funding, as they did a month ago, they are worried that they will make the President angry. But if they vote against funding, they are worried that their own constituents will be angry.

The fear of voting and being held accountable even extends to the floor session—the unusual floor session—that we are holding right now. At the end of the day on Thursday, I made good on my promise to object to adjourning the Senate while the government was closed. Of course, my objection, which I had lodged earlier in the week and on which I acted on Thursday, can be overcome. My objection to the recess that we were supposed to have can be overcome by a simple majority of the body. But, just as occurred last week, the majority was afraid to challenge my objection because it would have meant that they would have had to vote on whether to adjourn.

This shutdown—this attack on American workers and citizens—can end if the Senate is just willing to vote on the pending bills. But the fear of being held accountable, the fear of political consequence, is so great that the majority strategy currently is to avoid any vote whatsoever.

What is the fear of voting compared to the fear of losing your home? What is the fear of voting compared to the fear of not having health insurance? What is the fear of voting compared to the pain of letting your trusted baby-

sitter go or the humiliation of your children coming to you with their piggy banks to help you overcome your family's financial distress?

Can it be that one works so hard to come to this respected place, taking an oath to protect and defend the Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic, but then lets fear of accountability and political consequence become the overriding factor in one's decisions? That politics would motivate us all is no surprise but that it would so dominate the action—or, rather, inaction—of this body when the government of our Nation is closed is shocking to me. I am not young and I am not naive, but I never would have imagined in coming to this body that the Senate in the Article I branch of this democracy would take the position that we can't vote on any matter unless we know the President agrees.

I hope my colleagues will raise their voices and demand a vote on the pending bipartisan House bills. If we vote and the bills fail, we will have to go back to the drawing board, but I think we all know what will happen if we vote on those bills. If we vote on the House bills, the House bills will pass. The majority currently is withholding a vote, aware that if the vote happens, the bills will pass.

So on day 29, as the Senate seeks to avoid a vote and avoid accountability, my constituents—and all of our constituents—continue to suffer.

Heidi from Vienna wrote me:

My husband and I are both veterans and current federal employees without pay.

They are both veterans and both Federal employees without pay.

[W]e are at a breaking point. We haven't paid our mortgage, and our pediatrician donates medication to our children.

After a life of dedicated public service in support of my country, I never expected to find myself in this position. It's a breach of trust.

Sarah from Ashburn:

My husband and I are both federal law enforcement and have been working without pay during the shutdown. We have three young children and continue to not only have bills to pay, but childcare expenses to pay so we can continue to work without pay. We haven't had to borrow money yet, but soon we will have to take a good look at what our options are. We have cut back on all expenses, no eating out, no purchasing anything other than food and gas, no registering for spring sports or after school programs, no buying Girl Scout cookies or anything else extra. We don't want to get our margin of cash so low that we will have to use credit. We have been trying very hard to get out of debt—and credit is a last resort for us. We will be dipping into our emergency fund soon. I have worked for the federal government for 21 years, and I am very frustrated.

John from Fairfax Station:

My son is one of hundreds of thousands of federal contractor employees who have been essentially furloughed from their consulting jobs and forced to use 2019 Annual Leave (exhausted last week) and pay for lapsed health insurance because the federal agency that he works for has been closed by the Government Shutdown. If the Shutdown is not ended

soon, my son's firm will have to start laying off staff to offset millions of dollars in losses due to the federal work stoppage. This is the unpublicized nightmare of the shutdown . . . hundreds of thousands of federal contractors may lose their jobs because Trump is holding federal workers (and their contractors) hostage for his ineffective wall.

Theresa from Middletown:

I have been a public servant for 30+ years and you are using me and my family as pawns in a game no one can win. . . . I've dedicated my life to serving the American people and this is how you treat me?

I've had to go from giving food to the local pantries to wondering when I will be the one visiting these same pantries. My child is stressed because he doesn't know when he may be hungry, when we may be homeless, or when we will have to start selling things off—he literally has unopened Christmas gifts he won't open because he's afraid we'll need to return them to buy food. All for a . . . wall! That wall won't clothe, house or feed my family. God help us all!

Elizabeth from Pound, which is in Appalachia, VA:

Mr. President, I write to you as the wife of a Federal Corrections Officer at USP Lee. I urge you to help find a solution for the numerous people, like my family, who are getting ready to have our worlds crumble. On this Saturday, my family will not receive the paycheck my husband has earned for the past weeks. The stress that this is causing myself and my husband is compounding. We do not know how we are going to pay our bills, much less feed our children. He cannot even attempt to get a temporary job in the meantime because he is still having to go to his . . . job. My family's lives are being used as pawns in a political war. We are a typical working family in a rural area who live paycheck to paycheck. We pay our bills and taxes and have good credit and all of this is being jeopardized at no fault of our own. I cannot imagine going to my daughter's dance teacher and saying please continue to provide her with classes and we will pay you eventually, or the power company and saying please keep our lights and heat on and we will pay you eventually, etc. We do not know when that will be but "eventually". . . . SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE TO FIX THIS!

Jacquelyn from Manassas:

I am an FAA 35 years of service federal excepted and essential employee.

This is an interesting one.

December 23, 2018, would have been my reporting date to a new facility closer to my elderly mother to assist in her home care. I have broken my lease at my current residence and obtained an apartment at the new station [near my mom], which I can't move to until after this "Shutdown." The "Shutdown" has placed my career and life in limbo. My 81 year old Mother is anticipating my aid in her health and medical care. The financial burden of my Mother not receiving the biweekly allotment I provide has caused undue stress on her and myself. The urgency of my moving closer to her is time critical [for both her health and my finances].

Caroline from Fairfax:

We are stationed in Australia—

Her husband is a Federal employee, stationed overseas—

far from family and friends, with limited employment options for myself as the spouse. And now we find ourselves without a paycheck. And still liable for paying our mortgage on our home in Fairfax City. And liable for paying all medical expenses out of pocket, including my son's surgery two weeks before Christmas It's not a game.

Gracie from Woodbridge:

I am writing you now asking for your help. I've been a loyal Federal government employee for . . . 16 years, receiving $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ of what I could make in the private sector with little or no thanks from anyone. My husband, a veteran, was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer in June 2015 at the age of 35 and has been receiving treatment since, which is adding to our debt. We have two young children who each require the basics, of course, and who are involved in sports, something we want to encourage. We have a mortgage payment, car payments, other debt, and student loan debt, which we will likely still be paying when our children go to college. And we have not been able to save for their college because we're still paying mine off. . . . All this adds salt to the wound of also being a furloughed employee. I know I am not alone but we are being held hostage for political purposes. So I'm not receiving any pay right now and the Department of Education is somehow calculating that I should be able to pay \$600/a month [for my loans]. I do not like asking for help. I was raised to be very independent and pull myself up from my bootstraps.

Sara from Fredericksburg:

I am a mother of 2 and a wife to an FBI employee. We are now approaching the end of week 4 of the shutdown and there is no end in sight. By the end of this month our accounts will be almost empty. We have had to have the hard conversation with our children about the lack of funds and making cuts in order to pay our bills and cost of medication. My son has asthma and a blood pressure disorder, which both can be life threatening. He is on medication to treat his conditions, but if the government doesn't open and our sole provider does not receive his pay, how are we supposed to fulfill our responsibilities as parents in keeping our kids safe and healthy?

Finally, Christopher from Leesburg shared this on my Facebook page:

I'm a federal employee who used the last of his discretionary funds today to attend my grandfather's funeral, my second funeral in a month, and repair our vehicle so that we could make it home to our kids from hours away. Now I'm preparing to file for unemployment, my wife is going to have to try to get a job despite her severe and crippling anxiety, and we've had to return some of the Christmas presents [that we bought] for ourselves, our four-year-old son, and our six-year-old daughter. Now we have to figure out what to do next because our car is still in need of major repair, we need to buy food for our daughter's lunchbox for kindergarten each day, and afford family meals and gas. We've always lived paycheck to paycheck because of the high cost of living in northern Virginia and we don't have the option to take out loans because we incurred so much debt moving to the area and dealing with my wife's medical bills. . . . I gave up military service to join the civil service and have been so disheartened to see the lack of respect for federal employees.

This is just a sample, and I know every Senator in this body is receiving these. Per capita, I may receive more because I represent Virginia, but only 20 percent of our Federal employees are in the DC-Maryland-Virginia area, and 80 percent are all over the country. These stories are common. We are getting them in the dozens and scores every day.

I return to a request, and I am speaking to the choir as I address this President because I know we largely share the views that I have expressed.

We stand for office. We work hard to get here. We are elected, and it is a privilege to be here. The thing we are

supposed to do in being here is to be willing to vote yes or no and be held accountable for our votes.

The fact that these bills that would end the pain that I have just read to you about are sitting right there on the desk and could be voted on immediately if the majority agreed but that maneuvers are being used to block the vote from happening is, in some ways, the most discouraging aspect of this.

With confidence, I am aware that if the bills were called and voted on, we would vote for them, and government could reopen immediately. I would encourage my colleagues to abate and end the pain that I have just described and hold that vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, it is unusual to be here on a Saturday morning in Washington, DC, but recognizing that we have been in the midst of a partial government shutdown for now 29 days, it seems to me that this is an absolutely appropriate place where we should be. We should be here working. We should be here trying to figure out how we get back to the business of governing.

I think it is fair to say that there has been a great deal of frustration. I think the four Senators who are assembled in this Chamber today are part of a group with whom I have shared that frustration on a daily, if not hourly, basis.

I think there have been very good-faith efforts to try to advance discussions on a bipartisan basis and a bicameral basis, trying to allow for a process that would allow us to consider the work and the legitimate request of a President who has clear priorities when it comes to border security and what we need to do and how we might need to do it, but it is very difficult to do it when we are not fully governing, when you have a partial government shutdown, when you have men and women who we are asking to do the work within their Agencies, but then they are not being paid. They are being told they will be paid when this is all over, but the uncertainty of when that "all over" is is very heavy on them—very heavy on them and their families.

Today, I want to share with colleagues the view from one community in Alaska. Alaska is a State that relies heavily on our Coast Guard. We have about 3,000 active Coast Guard in this State—2,972 exactly, and 285 civilians. We are proud to host the largest Coast Guard Air Station in the country on Kodiak.

I thought Kodiak was the largest island in the country. It is not. Hawaii beats us. The Big Island beats us. Kodiak is a large, large island off of the southeastern, southwestern, and south central part of the State of Alaska. There are about 6,000 people in Kodiak—6,013 based on the last census.

Within that Coast Guard community of Kodiak, you have 1,141 Active Duty, 102 civilian employees, and 1 Coast Guard reservist. This is a community. When they say that we are a Coast Guard town, Kodiak is truly a Coast Guard town. It is about one-third of the economy that is based off of the Coast Guard there.

This is an island that—I don't know. I probably should have checked air prices before I came to the floor, but it seems to me the last time I flew down there, going out of Anchorage to Kodiak, you are probably spending \$400 to \$500 for an airplane ticket.

So you are geographically removed. You are removed certainly from a financial perspective in terms of your ability to move back and forth. Jobs are challenging in a community like this. December, January are usually the highest months of unemployment, but in December, so just last month, we were at 8.8 percent in Kodiak. You compare that to last January of 2018, it was 8.4 percent. So there is a lot of unemployment there. There are not a lot of jobs and job opportunities in a community like this.

So you have your Coast Guard, and the other economic base for the community, really, is our fisheries and our local and small businesses.

So within the fisheries, you have your Federal Government Agencies that are there to provide for the opportunities. Right now, we are going into the "A" season for pollock, I believe, coming up in just a few days, but this requires your Agencies to be up and functioning. So it is NOAA. It is NMFS. It is Fish and Wildlife. You need to have these folks in their offices answering the phone, responding to texts.

We also, on Kodiak Island, have significant refuge land, parkland, and, again, Fish and Wildlife managers on the refuge there.

So we have an island community cut off from the rest of the State—probably 4,300, 4,400 miles from where we are sitting here today—and the reliance on the Federal interest is probably pretty disproportionate relative to other communities.

Much of the Indigenous population there relies on the Kodiak Area Native Association Healthcare. So the Indian Health Service is having challenges because the Department of Interior is shut down. So the impact in so many different ways on this community of 6,000 people is extraordinarily substantial.

I made contact with the spouses of the Coast Guard's men and women there and asked if I could do a Skype, do a FaceTime with them while they were having coffee because I wanted to understand for myself, what does it mean when you are the Coast Guard spouse and your husband or your wife is out either flying as a C-130 pilot down in the Aleutians, whether it is a helo pilot who is looking to do a medevac out of King Cove, whether it

is the wife of one of the spouses who is out on the *Alex Haley*, whether it is the spouse who is at dry dock on the *SPAR* in Seward, the aviation instructor—these are all men and women who are going out, and they are doing really important things for us in Alaska.

This is a time of year when the fishing industry is going strong. It is crab season, but it is also not cruise weather for those who are out on the waters, and we rely on the extraordinary efforts of our Coast Guard's men and women to provide for that search and rescue, if need be, and fisheries enforcement—so the role the Coast Guard plays in not only supporting the local economy but making sure that second leg of our economy, the fisheries, are safe, regulated, and protected.

Let me show you just the base there in Kodiak. It is nothing grandiose and beautiful and extraordinary. It is actually an extraordinarily beautiful location to be stationed there in Kodiak. This is the community. This is where they live and work and raise their families. There are others who are sitting up on the hillside in housing, but it is a pretty tight-knit community.

To be able to visit with this group of spouses yesterday was really quite compelling, and so I wanted to just take a few minutes and share some of the comments from these, primarily women—and men—about what is happening right now.

One individual, Sarah, mentioned that her husband is out on the *SPAR*, which is a cutter. Well, they are in dry dock in Seward, another Coast Guard facility, but because they are not being paid, they are sitting in a community where they really have no resources to do anything. They have to stay on the ship. It is not like they can go off and go out and about. You are really kind of stuck there.

She happens to work for the Chamber of Commerce in Kodiak and so was able to share some of the stories about the impact on the local businesses, and she was saying that you go on Facebook and there will be postings of empty restaurants, empty establishments, saying: Please come. We are looking for customers. There is a discount for coming in and having a cup of coffee. King's Diner's business is down 50 percent. They are offering a 10-percent discount to those without paychecks.

We got a call from a gentleman who has a welding business there in Kodiak, and he says he is out \$300,000 in payments from Coast Guard projects that have already been completed. He said these contracts equal 10 to 15 percent of his gross annual income. So what is he doing? He is not a Federal employee, but it is impacting his business in a significant—significant—way, and he is saying: I am going to have to go out and get loans.

So the impact on the community writ large is clearly significant.

Some of the other comments we heard was about the effort to provide for food—so the effort to provide for

local food distribution through a food pantry and the effort to collect donations from around the State to be able to send down to Kodiak. These are things where you think, oh, the generosity of Alaskans to come together, but in talking to these spouses, they reminded me: We are the guardians of our homeland. We are proud people. We are proud families, and to think that in order to be able to serve and to keep the family fed, I have to go to a food pantry? This is really, really very, very hard.

Kodiak, as you saw from the map there, is isolated. Isolation delivers a lot of different things, and one thing it clearly delivers is that it is expensive to live there. It is expensive to live there.

We were told that right now the price of gas is about \$4 a gallon. There was a report that came out of NBC this week that mentioned that one individual said his weekly budget for food was three times more than his friend who happens to live in Ohio. So it is keeping your house warm, filling up your vehicle, buying groceries at the store.

Childcare is something we talked about extensively because the hours at the childcare center have been cut back. There is no alternative, really, out in the community for childcare for these Coast Guard men and women. There is, I think she said, not even two facilities where they were taking children under the age of 6 months. So infants we are seeing on base—and apparently there has been a good slug of new babies who have been born. We are growing some new Coast Guard recruits here, but when you don't have the ability to provide for childcare, and you need to be working, where do you go? What do you do?

The price of childcare, in talking to one of the spouses there, is \$1,600 a month. So think about that. You have a child, \$1,600 a month for one child, and you are paying \$4 a gallon for gas. You are some 4,000 to 5,000 miles away from any family support. So it is not like you can just say to grandma or to your aunt: Hey, can you come and help me with the kids? You don't have that kind of support like we do in other areas.

So when we talk about the impacts of a shutdown, a partial shutdown, and not getting pay, at least for this period, for an indefinite period, it is more than just the financial impact. We talked a lot about that, but even more than the financial impact was the stress that comes to the families because of the financial impact.

The reality you face as a Coast Guard family is you move a lot. So you have that stress. You are away from your family support system, like I mentioned. You have a lot of families with new kids. Now you don't know when you are going to see that pay. You are in a place where your costs are really high. You don't have many options for short-term or short-time work.

I asked: Well, what are you doing? Are any of you getting additional work

to help bridge this gap? They all just kind of laughed. It wasn't a happy laugh. It was a cynical laugh, like, where do you expect us to go to work when the establishments we might go to, whether it is a restaurant or some small business, is posting things on Facebook, saying that we need customers? Do you think they are going to hire people? That is not happening in a community like this.

Further, they don't know how long they may be there. If it requires some level of training and you can't commit and you say: Well, if the government gets back to business, maybe, just maybe, I don't need to be here—well, you are not going to be investing in that individual. So you have that stressor.

The stress I think our families see—and I have such respect for the men and women who are staying at home while our Active are serving, whether they are helping pluck fishermen out of the sea in the north or whether they are interdicting drugs in the southern waters—spouses have learned how to hold things together and be tough, just figure it out. There is not a lot of complaining that is going on.

When you have a mom tell me, as she did yesterday, that the spending money the kids got for Christmas, they said: We are not going to spend it, Mom, because we think we might need it for food or when the 13-year-old girl says: I am not going to cash the birthday check I got from Grandma because we might need it—and I was reminded by several of these spouses that this is an adult problem. This is not a kids' problem. Our children should not have to be worrying about this, but they can't help but pick it up. They know what is going on, and they are worried. To have a mom tell me—one of the moms said: We are just doing everything to pull it together, so I am having to say things like: I am sorry. We are not going to be ordering the yearbook.

This is not paying for fancy sports programs even, it is: I don't know that we are going to be able to order the yearbook, and it is canceling tutors. It is making a difference in all of that.

I think, again, about the weight our spouses are bearing and how they are handling it.

One woman said: Hey, we are lucky. My husband is an avid hunter and a fisherman. We have a freezer full of meat. We have moose and salmon, but not everybody is so lucky here.

One woman said: I have made a complete inventory of everything I have in the pantry just so I know and I can be planning ahead.

This is hard on everyone.

The impact to enlistment is something we need to be thinking about, and that was raised repeatedly.

One woman said: My husband and I both joined the Coast Guard because we liked the stability that this offered us—maybe not stability insofar as moving around from location to location but stability in the fact that you

are a Federal employee. You are going to have that support from your government.

She said: You know, now, I don't think of this as a very stable opportunity.

Another thing I learned yesterday is that it was apparently just a week or so ago—maybe it was a couple of weeks ago—that the Coast Guard boot camp program where the new recruits come in was completed. Where did those young Coasties go who have the new shaved, good-looking tops? They went back home. They sent them back home because they don't have any place for them to go. What do you think that does to recruitment?

Another issue that came up that was fascinating to me that we don't think about in this land of unintended consequences when there is a partial government shutdown that goes on for 29 days—these Coast Guard men and women—Federal employees—when they do official travel, it goes on an official card. That card is issued in your name. So if you are the Coast Guard member who needs to go out and inspect a boat in Dutch Harbor and you are based out of Anchorage, a flight to Dutch Harbor roundtrip, last I checked, is close to \$1,000. That goes on the card. The way the process works is that you are reimbursed on your government card, but during this shutdown, none of these expenses are being reimbursed. That card is tied to your name, tied to your credit rating. That was where the conversation really got lively. The spouses were talking about, do you know what happens to us when the credit rating goes south? Do you know what that means in terms of our ability to have a security clearance? Do you know what that means in terms of our ability to transfer?

It would be one thing if you could say: Oh well, I will just pay for it out of my savings.

That was what another spouse said to me. She said: You know, I really take offense because I feel there are a lot of people out there who place judgment on us because they say "You should have saved for something like this." The response is "I am in the Coast Guard. I move around."

Many of these families have invested in a home, and when they are transferred, they keep that home. They try to make some money off of it. Many of them rent to another Coast Guard family. Now that family is not getting paid either. The stress compiled upon stress is just awful.

We were reminded that this is not a natural disaster; this is a manmade disaster.

Another woman said: The military are proud. They should be honored and respected.

One really summed it up from the Coast Guard's view, in my opinion. She said: We are not going to sink. We are not going to sink. We will still float, but that doesn't mean that we are not upset and we are not angry.

They shared these stories with a great deal of respect but were truly begging for us to resolve these issues. They all understand that there is this effort out there to pay the Active-Duty and military Coast Guard, but there are Coast Guard families on this base, and there are Active Coast Guard working side by side with the civilians, helping them keep those boats in tip-top shape, keeping the helicopters in the air, keeping the C-130s in the air. They are all working together. So how is it right that side by side, oftentimes sharing the same job, that one would get pay and the others would not? So they have said: Don't forget the civilian side as well.

I want to end my comments because I know the Senator from Virginia would like to speak as well.

I have a soft spot in my heart for Kodiak. I think that is because I myself am a Coast Guard kid. When I go to Kodiak, the gathering place in Kodiak is a great little brewery called Kodiak Brewery. It is a gathering place for not only the politicians who come to town but all the Coasties. The community comes together. This is where birthdays take place. This is where you come and have a beer after work.

This is an online post from yesterday. It says:

This is a sad empty brewery. We're lonely and you're thirsty, and we want to support our community in a time of need. We're doing a "shutdown" sale: \$1 off servings until sanity prevails! Hopefully we all get through this!

There is not a soul in the place. It is just a reminder of the extraordinary ripple effect. When you say it is just the Federal employees, first of all, I think that is offensive because our Federal employees do extraordinary service for our country. It affects all of us, and it is up to all of us to get this resolved.

I have been so disappointed this week that we have not been able to advance a more positive solution, to work on an immediate outcome to help with this, but my frustration is nothing compared to these families'—these men and women who are serving, those who are staying at home—the worry, angst, and stress we see. We owe it to the people of Kodiak, we owe it to the people of this country to get this place working again.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator from Virginia will withhold for just a moment.

Mr. WARNER. Yes, Madam President.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 25, submitted earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows: