

radio wave and the right to send it. Our FCC gets to decide who gets to use those radio waves and who has the right to send those radio waves.

There is a particular type of radio wave that is absolutely perfect for 5G. It is between 180 megahertz and 300 megahertz. Why are these radio waves so perfect for 5G? Well, because they strike a balance. First, the radio waves in that spectrum, as it is called, can go a fairly long distance, and they can carry huge amounts of data. That is going to make driverless cars possible. We have heard about those—the internet of things. That is going to make remote surgery possible, where a doctor who is in one place physically and through the internet, using a robot, can perform surgery on someone 1,000 miles away. 5G going through these special radio waves is going to make all that possible. It is going to change our lives.

Right now, those radio waves—I will call them the C-band spectrum—as I said, are owned by the American people. They are being used by three satellite companies—two from Luxembourg and one from Canada—and some other companies. They are satellite companies. They don't own those radio waves. They don't even have a license to use those radio waves. They didn't pay anything to get to use those radio waves. The FCC said they could use them. It is sort of like a month-to-month lease or rental agreement where you don't have to pay any rent.

Some time ago, those three companies came to the FCC and said: Even though we don't own those radio waves you allow us to use and even though the American people own those radio waves, which are perfect for 5G, we are willing to give them up to use for 5G, but here is what we want you to do.

The three foreign companies said: We want you to give us those radio waves, and then we will auction them off to the telecommunications companies that want to use the radio waves for 5G.

This was the kicker: The three foreign corporations said they want to keep the money.

Investment bankers estimate that through that auction being conducted by those three foreign corporations, as much as \$60 billion would have been generated. That is how much telecommunications companies would pay to get the license to use those radio waves.

Some people encouraged the FCC to do that. They said that we ought to do it because these three foreign companies can do an auction faster than the FCC can—even though the three foreign companies had never done an auction of spectrum and even though the FCC has done over 100 public auctions for other radio waves that the FCC has auctioned off. In doing that, the fine men and women at the FCC in charge of these auctions—they have been doing it for 25 years—have brought in \$123 billion for the American people.

That will build a lot of interstate, it will educate a lot of kids, and it will pay a lot of soldiers.

But our three friends—these foreign satellite companies—still said: Even though we have no experience, we can do it faster. If you let the FCC do it, it will take them 7 years.

Well, that just wasn't accurate. I have spoken to the people in charge of doing auctions at the FCC. In fact, on Thursday, they are going to appear before a subcommittee that I chair. We are going to talk about it some more. I don't know where this figure of 7 years came from, but it is just not accurate.

Nonetheless, the FCC came under—there are swamp creatures in the government; we know that. Some of these swamp creatures in and out of government put an awful lot of pressure on the FCC. These swamp creatures are trying to help some of their friends in the telecommunications business. One of the foreign corporations spent about half a million dollars lobbying. I am not saying there is something wrong with that. We all have the right to petition our government. But that is just the fact. I don't mean it in a pejorative sense.

The FCC was under a lot of pressure, but yesterday, the Chairman of the FCC, Ajit Pai, looked at all this. He resisted the pressure, and he announced that we are going to have a public auction. We are going to let every telecommunications company in America that wants to bid on these valuable air waves come forward and bid. We are going to do an auction within a year and probably less, not 7 years, and the money that is going to be generated is going to go to the owner of those radio waves, not the foreign companies that, through our benevolence, are now using those radio waves. The money is going to go to the American people.

I know what you are thinking. You are thinking: Gosh, how was this ever even an issue? This should have been a no-brainer.

Well, that is part of what is wrong with Washington, DC, in my judgment. Sometimes—not always but sometimes—the American people aren't put first. But yesterday, Ajit Pai, our Chairman at the FCC, put them first, and I just wanted to stand up today and tell him a genuine and heartfelt thank-you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

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

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

PREVENT GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWNS ACT

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, in the last 40 years, we have had 21 government shutdowns—21. Twenty-one times, Congress and the President have

not been able to agree or the Senate and the House have not been able to agree. As a result of that, Federal workers around the country have faced the consequences of Members of Congress not finding agreement.

Help me understand this. Twenty-one times in 40 years, Federal workers who get up every single day and serve the American people and serve their neighbors have faced the consequences of furloughs because Members of Congress could not come to a resolution. It is not that it has gone unnoticed. For a decade or more, there have been solutions that have been proposed.

Ten years ago, I had a proposal in the House—actually, ROB PORTMAN had a great proposal in the Senate at the same time to deal with government shutdowns. Let's say when we get to the end of the fiscal year, we will just have a continuing resolution, but then we will cut spending every few months to press Congress to get to their work. The problem was, hardly anyone on the other side agreed with that. We couldn't get any bipartisan support for it. So my colleagues on the other side of the aisle proposed that if we get to the end of the fiscal year, we would have a continuing resolution, and every couple of months, the spending would go up, and it would just continue to go up and up and up until it was resolved. Well, they didn't have anyone on my side of the aisle saying “We are going to put in a mechanism that just increases spending over and over again without congressional involvement,” so they got no bipartisan support.

An idea was floated to just cut the pay of the Members of Congress. But it really wasn't cutting their pay; it was taking their pay and putting it in an escrow account and just kind of holding it for them, and then when everything was resolved, they would get their money back. So it really wasn't a reduction in pay; it was kind of a shell game—push those dollars off to another side and get them all back later just to make it look like you got a cut in pay. But that hasn't had wide support either. A lot of people have real concerns about that because, quite frankly, some Members of Congress are very wealthy; some Members are not. Some Members don't notice their congressional pay; some do. It is kind of a disproportionate piece of leverage to resolve this.

What is interesting is that all those proposals acknowledged one simple thing: This is a problem. It needs to be resolved. Federal workers are facing the consequences; Members of Congress are not.

About 5 months ago, MAGGIE HASSAN and I—this Chamber knows well the Senator from New Hampshire. She and I started working together on a nonpartisan—not just a bipartisan but a nonpartisan—way to stop government shutdowns. We have two very simple proposals.

There are two problems here. We need to stop Federal workers from getting hurt when there is a shutdown and

make sure those families are not hurt. The second thing is, we want to actually get to appropriations, not continuing resolutions.

When do you a continuing resolution for any length of time, like what we are in right now—we are in our eighth week of a continuing resolution right now. When you do one that long, it hurts temporary workers who are Federal workers. They are laid off in the process. Other folks are not. Many of these agencies need those temporary workers, and those temporary workers are counting on that salary. It hurts contracting because everything can't start in a continuing resolution. You have to wait until there are real appropriations before new programs can start. You can't stop old programs. You can't do purchasing. It creates a tremendous inefficiency in government.

Our simple idea was this: Let's find a way to protect Federal workers and get to appropriations. The solution we came up with is pretty straightforward. When we get to the end of the fiscal year, which right now is October 1, if appropriations are not done, there will be a continuing resolution that kicks into effect to protect Federal workers, but Members of Congress and our staff and the White House Office of Management and Budget—none of us can travel. Members of Congress will be in continuous session 7 days a week until we get appropriations done. And one more thing: We can't move to any issues other than appropriations. We are locked into that box.

Basically, if our work is not done, we all will have to stay until the work is done. I have had folks say that is not really a big consequence. A lot of folks do that all over the country all the time. If at the end of their workday their work is not done, they have to stay until they get it done. Small business owners know that full well. It is not like you can punch a clock. If the work is not done in a small business, you stay until it actually gets done.

Here is the thing. Go back to last December. When the shutdown started last December and we got to an impasse here between the House, the Senate, and the White House, Members of Congress and our staff all left and went home. Federal workers across the country all took a big, deep breath as they walked into the holidays because they were on furlough, but Members of this body walked out. That should never happen—never.

What Senator HASSAN and I are proposing is very simple. The pressure shouldn't be on Federal workers. They can't vote to solve this. The pressure should be on us.

For everyone in this body who says, "I don't like that kind of artificial pressure," why don't you feel what it is like to be a Federal worker for a while and those Federal employees? They don't like that pressure on them. So let's flip it. Let's put the pressure on us, where it should be, and get it off the folks, where it should not be, and let's stay until we get our work done.

This idea is overly simplistic, but what is interesting is, for the first time in a decade, there is an idea that has bipartisan support. We have multiple Members of this body who are looking at it, contemplating it, and then nodding their heads, saying: I would rather the pressure be on us than on the Federal workers and their families.

Let's solve this. We shouldn't have government shutdowns. We should have arguments over debt and deficit. We should have arguments over the budget. That is why people sent us here—to solve how their money is going to be spent most efficiently and argue about issues on debt and deficit.

In the meantime, why in the world would we want to hurt the very people who serve their neighbors, those people being the Federal employees around the country? Let's keep them out of it. Let's keep them still serving their neighbors, and let's keep the fight right here where it needs to be. Let's argue this out until we get it resolved, and let's not quit until we resolve it. It is a simple idea that Senator HASSAN and I actually believe will work.

In the decades to come, people will look back at the time when we used to have government shutdowns and will shake their heads and say: I can't believe there was a period of time during which the Federal government used to shut down when they argued. Now we stay until we get the issue settled.

It is a pretty straightforward idea, and I hope that more of my colleagues will join us in this absolute commitment to solving this for future generations.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING KAY HAGAN

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I want to spend a few minutes recognizing our late colleague and my friend Senator Kay Hagan.

Kay and I both came to the Senate in 2009. I had the privilege of working with her on two committees—HELP and Banking. As a former vice president of the North Carolina National Bank, she had a lot more to offer to that committee than I had, and I tried to learn from her whenever I could. Kay and I both came to the Senate in the middle of the worst recession since the Great Depression. We were losing 700,000 jobs a month, and millions were losing their homes. It was an incredibly difficult moment for the country, but it brought out all of Kay's best qualities.

Everyone knew that Kay faced some of the toughest politics of any Member of our caucus, but in those early days, I saw her take vote after vote on some

of the hardest issues. She never wavered. She voted for the Recovery Act to save the economy when we were in free fall. She voted for Dodd-Frank to restore confidence and accountability to the financial sector, which was something she knew quite a lot about. She spoke out against amendment No. 1 in North Carolina and for marriage equality. She also cast a decisive vote for the Affordable Care Act.

As a Democratic Senator from North Carolina and as a freshman Senator, none of those positions were easy to take, but she knew they were the right places to be for her State and for the country. Because Kay did what she did, millions of Americans kept jobs they would have lost, and millions of Americans gained quality, affordable health insurance for the first time in their lives. In her home State, the LGBT community had a Senator in Washington who, for the first time in history, was willing to fight for their full and equal rights.

One of our colleagues, the senior Senator from Tennessee, likes to say: If you have come to Washington just to hear yourself talk, just stay home and get a job on the radio. It is not worth the trouble of your coming all the way here.

Kay didn't come to Washington to talk. She came to work and to lead.

Over her term, Kay was a fierce and principled advocate for North Carolina. As a member of the Committee on Armed Services, she helped to prevent cuts to tuition programs for veterans. She sponsored the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act to help close the gender pay gap across the country. She worked across the aisle to promote conservation and outdoor recreation, which is something we appreciate in my home State of Colorado.

She was a lot less interested in the empty politics of this town and a lot more interested in making progress for the people of North Carolina and for our country. She was a voice of reason, pragmatism, and humility in this body, which sorely lacks all three. In other words, Kay took her job seriously but never herself, and no matter how difficult it might have been, she never failed to put the people of North Carolina ahead of the politics of the moment. It is why she earned deep respect from both sides of the aisle, not only for her work ethic but for her kindness, her warmth, and her grace. There was not a room in this complex, including the one I am standing in right now, that wasn't brightened the moment that Kay Hagan walked in.

To Chip, her husband, and to their kids—Jeanette, Tilden, and Carrie—I hope you know how proud we all are of Kay. She represented the best qualities of North Carolina. It is why her colleagues adored her. It is why her staff loved her and revered her, and it is why all of us who had the privilege of working with her in this body will miss her terribly.

I yield the floor.