

## RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I come to the floor to speak in support of the 2-year bipartisan budget agreement reached by Representative RYAN and Senator MURRAY. I am pleased that the budget agreement passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support and that cloture was invoked in the Senate today.

I understand there are many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle who are very unhappy with this deal and intend to vote against it. My only response to that is I respect their vote, but I would like to know what we do in order to avoid another shutdown of the government. The American people steadfastly reject a shutdown of the government. I have concerns about the budget deal—I think everybody does—because of the nature of the way business is done. But to somehow vote against it without an alternative to keep the government from shutting down lacks some intellectual integrity.

My support and vote will be based on two important facts:

It will prevent another government shutdown, which we cannot put the American people through or the people of my State through again.

It goes a long way in alleviating the devastating impact of sequestration on our military. Have no doubt that the sequestration has had a devastating effect on many aspects of our ability to defend this Nation. Don't just talk to our leadership but talk to the men and women who are serving. They don't know where they are going to go next. The pilots aren't flying, the ships aren't sailing, and the training is not being conducted. That is unfair to the men and women who are serving their military, and I would remind us that all have volunteered to serve this country in harm's way.

This budget deal will avert another government shutdown and reduce the impact of sequestration. It will reduce the deficit by roughly \$23 billion without raising taxes.

Peggy Noonan is a noted conservative columnist who writes for the Wall Street Journal and served in the Reagan administration. She observed in a Wall Street Journal op-ed:

[t]he government is now unable even to pass a budget, to perform this minimal duty. Instead, Congress and the administration lurch from crisis to crisis, from shutdown to debt-ceiling battle. That gives a sense the process itself is broken, and this lends an air

of instability, of Third World-ness, to the world's oldest continuing democracy. We can't even control our books. We don't even try. That's my context for the Ryan-Murray budget deal.

She continued:

Should it be passed? Yes, yes and yes. The good things about it are very good. The idea that Republicans and Democrats are capable of coming to a budget agreement is good. The idea that they can negotiate and make concessions and accept gains is good. The idea the U.S. government is able to produce anything but stasis and acrimony is good. That we can still function even in the age of Obama—good.

She noted:

[This] agreement moves us an inch or two in the right direction. Let me tell you what that's better than: It's better than moving a few inches in the wrong direction! And it's better than where we've been, in a state of agitated paralysis.

Only weeks ago we all witnessed firsthand the impact a government shutdown had on our constituents, and none of us wants to go through that again.

In my home State of Arizona, the impact was very significant. Nearly 500,000 visitors were turned away from Arizona's national parks during the shutdown. Arizona lost about \$33 million in visitor spending. At Grand Canyon National Park, food banks had to rush supplies to 2,200 employees of the concessionaires inside the park who were furloughed or laid off. Arizona spent about \$500,000 in donations to reopen the Grand Canyon for 5 days during the shutdown.

The list goes on and on.

Our approval rating, I would say to my friends on this side of the aisle, and our party's approval rating plummeted. The damage was severe.

Now we have an agreement. I repeat to my colleagues who would vote against this—both on that side of the aisle and this side of the aisle—if you have a better idea, bring it up, let's consider it, and let's vote on it because the only alternative to this is a government shutdown. Let's not deceive ourselves about why we are voting and what we are voting on.

I admit it is not perfect. I think it has caused heartburn for all of us. One potentially problematic provision—and it is problematic—would slow the growth of cost-of-living adjustments for working-age—and I emphasize “working-age”—military retirees. Let me point out that the COLAs for working-age military retirees under the age of 62 will continue to grow after 2015, in most cases more slowly than before.

The fact is that the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee—one of the most admired and respected individuals in this Senate—has stated that we will review this provision, and we will review it in the context of the work that is already being done on the Senate Armed Services Committee, and that is a review of all paid benefits and aspects of our military that, in the words of former Secretary of Defense Mr. Gates that these entitlements in the military are “eating us alive.”

I would like to give an example. In 2012 military retirees and survivor benefit recipients received \$52 billion. In 10 years that will grow to \$59 billion. By 2034 it will grow to \$108 billion per year. From 2001 to 2011 payments to military retirees grew by 49 percent. Every penny of it is deserved. Every penny of it we are proud we gave them. But I don't think there is any doubt that we are going to have to look at this whole issue of the pay, benefits, retirement, and all of that of members of the military in a prospective fashion.

I am confident that one of the items taken up next year in the Senate Armed Services Committee will be what we are passing today, but it will be brought up in the context of all of the aspects of personnel costs in the military today—keeping in mind that we have an all-volunteer service and we are proud and pleased of the fact that we have America's finest in the military.

But I can say for a fact that with this lurching from shutdown to shutdown, these draconian effects of sequestration—and I know my colleagues know that in 2014 there will be a more severe cut than at any time—these brave young men and women are getting sick and tired of not being able to do their jobs, and the best and the brightest are already making decisions as to whether to remain in the military.

I wish to mention one small aspect that I think is indicative. About 20 years ago there was a very large influx of pilots into the civilian airlines as airlines began to expand rather dramatically. That very large number of pilots is now nearing retirement age.

There is going to be a dramatic demand for airline pilots, who, as we all know, are very well paid. We are offering pilots \$225,000 to stay in and fly airplanes in the military. Do you know that the vast majority of these young pilots, these aviators, are not accepting that? One of the reasons they are not signing up is because a lot of times they don't fly anymore. They are not operating anymore, and they are spending time away from their homes and their families without being able to do what they were trained to do. This is only a small example of the impact of sequestration on the military.

I wish all of my colleagues who are members of the Armed Services Committee would listen to the testimony of our military leaders who tell us that already they may not be able to defend this Nation in the most efficient fashion because of the effects of sequestration.

All I can say is that if I had written this legislation—I think each one of us individually would have written it differently, but we didn't—the option of shutting down the government and the option of further damage inflicted by sequestration I hope would override the problems we see with this agreement. I want to promise my colleagues that I will work in every way with Senator