

To be clear, I strongly support continuing to fund the government, and I believe there are many good policies in the CR. It contains resources to address the spread of the Zika virus and disaster relief for flood victims, both of which I support a great deal. In fact, we know the threat Zika poses to our Nation's public health, and it is critical that we have finally passed funding to accelerate vaccine development, prevent Zika transmission, and boost public health efforts to the impacted communities. In addition to addressing these emergencies, I also support the inclusion of legislation to fully fund military construction and the VA for the coming year.

As a former lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, I support investments in VA programs, military personnel, and family housing for our servicemembers. This critical funding will also address disability claims processing, the health care needs of female veterans, and the urgent need to modernize the VA's information technology systems. Inclusion of veterans funding and resources to fight Zika had broad bipartisan agreement, but I think it is important to know the Senate also reached consensus on providing much needed relief to the victims in Flint by passing a WRDA bill earlier with 95 votes, but these fully paid-for Flint resources were put on hold while disaster relief for flood victims in Louisiana was included in the CR. I support helping the people of Louisiana, but I also strongly believe we should not be in a position where we pick some States to help and not others. Everybody, no matter who they are or where they live, if they are facing a crisis, if the U.S. Congress is going to help those in need, we need to help everyone regardless of where they live. Americans are Americans regardless of the State in which they reside; therefore, I could not support a government spending bill that will once again force the citizens of Flint to wait for the help they so desperately need.

It is simply unacceptable that a bipartisan, fully offset Flint aid package was left out of the CR. There is no excuse whatsoever for leaving the people of Flint behind. It has been a year since the first public health emergency declaration was made in Flint and over 8 months since a national emergency was declared. Yet almost 100,000 residents of Flint still do not have a reliable source of safe water. They are still using bottled water to drink, cook, and bathe.

I deeply appreciate the progress we have made so far, but Flint families should not have to wait any longer. When a disaster strikes in this country, we pull together to help each other out. We should do that for all communities. We shouldn't tell people who have waited so long—yet we are telling them—to get to the back of the line. This is why I cannot support this bill which prioritizes one State's emergency over another.

We should do right by the people of Flint as well as the victims of flooding, Zika, and other national emergencies.

Over the coming weeks, I will be working to ensure that we follow through on the promises that were made to the people of Flint this week in both Chambers of Congress. We must send a bill to the President that will help the people of Flint continue to replace their damaged pipes so they can turn their faucets on and have clean, safe water flowing from their taps once again. I certainly hope and expect that my colleagues in both Chambers will not let the people of Flint down in their desperate time of need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

(The remarks of Mr. COONS and Mr. BOOKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 3432 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

#### OUR BUDGET PROCESS

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today and ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my Republican colleagues up through the next hour.

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

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I believe what we are going to talk about over the next hour is one of the most important issues facing our government.

We sat here today and listened to a lot of very valid pleas for help from the Federal Government. The reality is, we don't have the money. There are four words I have not heard in the U.S. Senate or Congress, actually, since I have been here over the last year and a half, and those words are "We cannot afford it."

The problem is that right now we have a budget crisis. We have a debt crisis. Let me say this: Fixing the budget process will not solve the debt crisis. Let's be very clear about that. But we will not solve the debt crisis unless and until we address the dysfunction in our budget process.

The problem is that in the last 42 years, since the Budget Act of 1974, the budget process has only worked four times.

This chart explains this fact. We can see the yellow lines show that—and I hope my colleagues can focus on this—only four times in the last 42 years has this budget process that was enacted in 1974 actually functioned at all to fund the Federal Government.

One of the major responsibilities of our jobs here in the Senate and the House is to fund the Federal Government, to take care of discretionary needs such as those heard today from Flint, MI, Louisiana, West Virginia, and Maryland. These are valid needs, but every dime we spend in our discretionary spending is borrowed. I will talk more about that a little later. We have some speakers today who are going to talk about the results of not having a budget process that works.

This chart explains that over the last 42 years, since 1974, there were four times that the 13 appropriations bills actually got passed and we funded the government the way we are supposed to.

The blue lines are the actual appropriations bills. Since 1998—somewhere in there—we went from 13 bills to 12 bills that actually fund. These are appropriations bills that fund the Federal Government. They fund \$1.1 trillion of a \$3.9 trillion spend of the Federal Government.

This chart shows that over the life of this law—these are the laws, the appropriation bills that have been passed each year, and the average is the red line. The average over this period of time is 2.6 bills of the 12 or 13 bills that have to be passed to fund the government.

Over the last 19 consecutive years, we have used 107 continuing resolutions to get past the fiscal year to make sure we fund the government on the first day of the new fiscal year.

This is how serious this is. Next Monday is the first day of the next fiscal year, fiscal year 2017. We sitting here today are voting on the CR to get us past this day so the government doesn't have to shut down next week—those dreaded words of "irresponsibility" and "intransigence." Quite frankly, this is part of the problem because what happens is what happened last year.

The dysfunction in the system is centered around this: The budget is not a law, it is a resolution. That means that a majority, with 51 percent of the votes in this body, can pass a political statement. That is exactly what happened last year.

Let me say this before we go any further: Everything you hear today is nonpartisan. This should be about a nonpartisan exercise that we have in funding the government. Yes, we are going to have debates based on our partisanship and based on what our beliefs and principles are, but the basic process should be a politically neutral platform that allows us to argue our differences in the budget process, get to a budget, move to the appropriations, and fund the government by the end of the fiscal year, and we have only done that four times in the last 42 years.

The dysfunction is centered around this. If you look at this chart, every year we just don't have enough time, basically. And it is not just time, it is the process. The budget is based on a

resolution, and 51 percent can vote for it. Last year, as an example, the majority—the Republican majority, by the way—voted a political bill that took \$7.5 trillion out of the President's budget over the next 10 years without one Democratic vote. Then we got to the authorization process—and the authorization process, by the way, is a law and they have to have 60 votes. So guess what. The people on the other side of the aisle, my friends, said: Well, you didn't ask our opinion in the budget process, why do you want our help now? So they don't let us get on the appropriations. We have some \$310 billion that we are funding today that is not authorized, over 256 agencies and programs.

The next thing is we go to appropriation. Again, the minority party can stop the process by not letting us get on the bills.

We have a situation right now—this is nonpartisan, but it is a reality. The Defense appropriations bill which funds our military was passed unanimously in committee, the way it was supposed to operate. Democrats and Republicans got together, worked it out, made amendments, and came up with a bill that funded our Federal Government's military. Yet we tried six times to get it to the floor. There are political reasons why it hasn't gotten to the floor, but it shows the dysfunction we have in this process.

Mr. President, the time has come for us to address this process. I am so excited to have various Members of the freshman class here. We have the chairman of the Budget Committee coming down. We have some other senior Members who have been working on this for years.

I notice my good friend from the State of North Carolina, Senator THOM TILLIS, is here, and I will ask him to give us his perspective. There is a big military effort in their State, and Senator TILLIS has been a soldier in this, not only in the Senate but in his time as speaker of the house in North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank my colleague and friend from the great State of Georgia for taking a leadership position to really cleanse the dysfunction and the problems that are going on.

Mr. President, Senator PERDUE is only a 2-year politician. His tenure in the Senate is actually only 2 years. He has spent all of his time in business. He spent time in business, where you didn't keep your job if you couldn't balance your budget. You didn't keep your job if you couldn't make the difficult decisions year to year—making payroll, making strategic investments, and doing the kinds of things good business leaders do. That is what he has done all of his life. Now he finds himself in the U.S. Senate, where that is almost the exact opposite of what we do.

We just had passage of a continuing resolution today for a few weeks because we can't come to terms on long-term spending measures. Over a dozen bills passed out of appropriations with strong bipartisan support and within the constraints of the bipartisan budget, and now we can't get them passed. Why is that a problem? Because when you have the world's largest and most complex entity that has ever existed that can't figure out how much money it is going to spend or commit on more than about a 12-month cycle—and sometimes only a few months—how on Earth can you save money and make long-term investments?

We were in a committee hearing yesterday where we heard that right now it takes an average of 15 years from the concept of a new satellite to the time we are launching it into space. How on Earth can we make those long-term investments when we can't even be clear on what we are going to be spending money on but for every 12 months? This is a threat to our national security. This is a threat to our economic security. This is a threat to the security of every man and woman in the United States because they can't rely on the government to provide businesses or individuals with any kind of certainty whatsoever.

It is tough to make budget decisions, but they need to be made. I know a little bit about this because I was speaker of the house in North Carolina in 2011. We had a budget crisis. We had a \$2.5 billion debt and 6 months to solve it. Unlike the Federal Government, where you can run up a deficit every year—it is now almost \$20 trillion—most States, with the exception of maybe one or two, have a constitutional obligation to balance the budget, so we did it.

What was the result of providing that long-term certainty? Living within our means and actually having a transparent and decisive budget process. We had one of the greatest economic turnarounds in any State in the Nation in the last 5 years.

Being decisive and making the tough decisions accrues a benefit to the business community, accrues a benefit to every man and woman who lives in the United States, and it actually settles the global economic condition more than most people know.

At the end of the day, let's start doing our job. Let's not just create a budget like we did, a bipartisan budget, set it on the shelf, and then pass several appropriations bills and kill them on the floor. That is what is going on here, and I think my freshmen colleagues think it is time—there are a lot of people who put posters up here saying "Do your job," but they are failing to do their jobs by preventing us from doing one of the most important things we can do—make the tough, long-term fiscal decisions that are necessary for this great Nation.

I say to Senator PERDUE, thank you for allowing me to speak.

I thank Senator PERDUE for bringing up this very important subject. We need to stay in front of this and recognize that doing our job is tackling this budget crisis, tackling the uncertainty that we, by failing to do our jobs, are placing on every hard-working American and business in this country.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. PERDUE. I say to Senator TILLIS, thank you for coming to the floor and talking about this issue. With your experience in State government in North Carolina, you know that 44 States have a balanced budget law. Guess what States don't have a financial situation, a financial problem.

I thank the Senator for speaking.

I note that my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator LANKFORD, is on the floor.

He has been a warrior on this budget before when he was in the House and now in the Senate for the last 2 years. I welcome his comments to speak about this as well.

Senator LANKFORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, this is a long-term issue. This is not something new. I am amazed at the number of times I run into people in Oklahoma who say: Why can't we seem to get the budget done now? What has happened?

I have said: Let's back up for just a second. Since 1974 we have done a budget and done it correctly four times total. The Congressional Budget Act was created right after Watergate, in 1974, to try to create this more transparent process. What they created was a process so incredibly difficult to work with that it has worked four times since 1974. We have only had 2 years since 1974 when we haven't had a single CR. That is a continuing resolution. This body just passed another continuing resolution, meaning the appropriations process won't be done on time again this year. That was settled today.

The issues we face with budgeting are not new. It has been 20 years since we had no CR at all. This constant issue of putting the big budget issues off and trying to figure out how we are going to navigate through the Senate procedures and get the budget done has to stop. At some point we have to have a determination to say that we can't just keep saying: Next year this will improve; next year this will improve.

We are not going to get a better product until we get a better process. We have a very bad process right now, and we need to admit it is a bad process.

What I am proud of is that there are multiple Members of this body—from the leadership of the Budget Committee through the freshmen who are brandnew Senators—who are all focused on the same thing. Let's solve how we do budgeting and actually get to a better product by improving the process. What do we have? We have almost \$20 trillion in debt, and everyone

argues about what we are going to do on a few things to try to do management, but no one is really talking about how we actually get us back to balance and paying off the debt.

It is a common conversation I have with people in Oklahoma.

This is a conversation where people say: Can we ever get this resolved? Is it too late?

On the whole, Americans believe nothing will get better in Washington, DC, dealing with the budget, and their question is this: When and how does it get better? I wish I could give them a lot of hope on that.

What I typically tell people is this: Let's just do a "for instance." Right now, let's take the balanced budget piece that we had and that we put out earlier this year. It actually took 10 years and chipped away at the deficit. In 10 years we chipped away at it and got back to a balance where we had no deficit that year. It was balanced. Then let's say the next year we actually had a \$50 billion surplus. It would be a pretty good surplus. So we chip away and in 10 years get to balance. The next year we have a \$50 billion surplus.

Do you know how long it would take us to pay off our debt if we had a \$50 billion surplus? If we had a \$50 billion surplus every year for 460 years in a row, we would pay off our debt—460 years in a row of \$50 billion surpluses and we can get on top of this. Everyone says that is unreasonable. I would say it is certainly unreasonable if we don't change the way we do our process. It just continues to get worse.

There are some basic things we can do. We can do budgeting every 2 years. People may say: Well, how does that solve anything? Well, that is predictability and planning. It creates greater oversight.

Right now we do this every single year. In the speed of what has to be done, how it has to be done, there is very little oversight on our spending. We could actually put all the areas we have in spending—all accountable, every year.

Right now there is about 25 percent to 30 percent of our budget with the appropriations process that we actually focus on every year. The rest of it is on autopilot, and it is never touched.

Until we get everything in front of everybody every year to be able to look at it for oversight, we are not going to solve the big issues. We have to deal with what are called budget gimmicks.

I have been at war with a budget gimmick called CHIMPS. It is my favorite of the gimmicks. There are a lot of them out there. It stands for "changes in mandatory programs," or CHIMPS. The changes in mandatory programs is a budget gimmick out there that says we were planning to spend this much—when we really weren't, but on paper it said we were—and then instead we said: No, we are not going to spend that much this year so we will spend it on something else.

But guess what. The next year they come back to the exact same dollars

again and say: No, we are planning this year to do it, but we are really not, and so we will to spend it on something else.

It just adds debt every year. We will have billions of dollars of CHIMPS built into our budget and claim that the deficit is even lower than it is. It is not. It is just this budget gimmick, and in real dollars it makes it even bigger. We have to deal with those budget gimmicks in there and be able to take that away so that when the appropriations process is done you get real numbers. The hardest thing to get in DC is the real number. So you have to deal with all these gimmicks out there to remove those. You get a longer time period to be able to plan and create some certainty, but one of the key things we have to have is an actual deadline. This town doesn't function on anything other than deadlines and pressure points. When it is time that it actually has to be resolved, we get it resolved. But if we don't have to resolve it right now, this town just says: Tomorrow. We will get it done next week. We will get it done next session.

The focus is how do we actually create those pressure points? How about a simple idea that says that if we don't get the budget done on time—the appropriations bills done on time—then it goes to an automatic CR so we don't have a government shutdown, because government shutdowns just waste money on the whole? It automatically kicks in to last year's budget amount. But here is what changes. All of the Members of Congress, our budget, our staff for how we function, our operating expenses, all of our committees, and the Executive Office of the White House—that is the three groups. From both the House and the Senate and the White House, all of our budgets drop immediately. Let's say 4 percent, 5 percent, 6 percent the first day and then it does that for 30 days. Then, if you still don't have the appropriations process, it cuts again another big percentage. It puts the pressure where the pressure needs to be. It is not the fault of the agencies or the American people that the job wasn't done. It lies squarely in the House, the Senate, the White House, and our negotiations for not getting it done on time.

It is a simple mechanism to say: If the task has not been done, put the pressure where the pressure needs to be—the cuts in the House, the Senate, and on the White House. Push all of us to the table and get it resolved.

The goal is to do appropriations in a transparent process so the American people can see how their money is being spent and to be able to do it wisely and to be able to create a process where you can actually solve the problem.

Currently, we don't have a process that solves the problem. This magically doesn't balance the budget. It still takes hard decisions, but it at least creates a format where we could solve the problem. Right now, we don't even have that.

In step one, like an AA group, let's at least admit there is a problem. There is a problem.

In step two, let's get to work on fixing it and actually resolve the process. Then let's actually get to work balancing this and paying off our debt.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to talk about this issue.

Mr. PERDUE. I say thank you to Senator LANKFORD.

I think my colleagues can see the passion and history he has had here and a lot of great thoughts.

I note that the chairman of our Budget Committee in the Senate, Senator MIKE ENZI from Wyoming, is here on the floor. I am going to turn it over to him and ask him to give us his comments. He has been fighting this for years. As chairman of the Budget Committee last year, he managed to get a budget out of our committee that actually took over \$7 trillion out of the President's budget at that point in time.

I say to Senator ENZI, thank you so much for joining us.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for his comments. I don't get invited many places to speak because I talk about what the Senator has been talking about. It depresses people, but it is about time we got depressed over the budget and made some changes. I appreciate everybody on the committee and those who are not on the committee who have been working to solve this problem. I know that most of you ran on getting a balanced budget, getting to a balanced budget, balancing it now if we could.

I get real frustrated because I know we are \$20 trillion in debt and heading to \$29 trillion. Then I hear people say: Yes, but we cut the deficit in half.

That is not the debt.

I don't like the word "deficit." I call it overspending. That is what we are doing.

We just got the report that we are going to be \$590 billion overspent this year. As Senator LANKFORD pointed out, 70 percent of the budget is on autopilot. So that 30 percent that we get to make a decision on is \$1,070 billion.

We have to worry a little bit because interest rates might go up. But on \$20 trillion, if it is 1 percent, that is \$200 billion a year that we are throwing into a rat hole. But if that goes to 5 percent, which is the norm for the Federal Government, we are out \$1,000 billion a year in interest.

Let's see. We get to make decisions on a \$1,070 billion and \$1,000 billion of that would go to interest. We better solve this pretty quick. I think we could be at 5 percent within 3 years. The defense is over \$500 billion, and that is not enough.

We definitely have a problem, as has been pointed out by the chart. In the 40 years since the Congressional Budget Act was passed, we have only completed all 13 bills four times. We have been holding hearings in the Budget

Committee. This group of people have been holding other meetings to see how it is done in the private sector, how it is done by other countries, and how it is done by the States. Nobody does it like the Federal Government.

When I was trying to figure out first budgets, I found out the format we use is not the same as the one the Appropriations Committee uses and definitely not the same format the President uses. Then I found out that is intentional. That is so you cannot follow the dollars.

But there are a lot of problems besides that in following the dollars. For instance, we have 120 housing programs administered by 20 different agencies. That is not seven per agency or one having more than the others. That means that the 120 programs are administered by all 20 of the agencies. Nobody is in charge. There is no goal set. We don't know if they completed what they set out to do, and there is no way to make a correction if they did.

I pointed out a lot of times how far behind we are on actually approving the things that we do. We don't ever go back and look at the old stuff. We are paying for a program from 1983 that has expired, another one from 1987, and a whole bunch of them from before 2006. We have to get off this auto pilot and get to a new format.

I congratulate this group and particularly Senator PERDUE. The first time we had a Budget Committee meeting I remember introducing him, and I said: Senator PERDUE knows how to balance a budget. He has been working in the private sector.

He said: No, in the private sector you have to show a little bit of a profit.

Well, we are going to have to show a little bit of a profit around here if we are ever going to get rid of the debt. We better do that or our kids are really going to suffer.

In fact, in the private sector we are having some pension problems, but we have been making the private sector put money away for the pensions, invest the money so they would be able to meet the promise that they made.

The Federal Government doesn't do that. We just take it out of this budget.

If we spend \$1,000 billion on interest and there is only \$1,070 billion, what do you think is going to happen to Federal employees who are expecting retirement? That could be in worse shape than the multiemployer plans.

We are going to have to come up with some solutions, and I appreciate this approach where we are looking at what the private sector does, what the States do, and what other countries do—and they have had success.

It is a little difficult because it causes some reorganization in what we are doing. Maybe we can wind up with one or five housing programs, and they would all be under one agency so we could have goals.

We are going to have a portfolio method of budgeting so that we know what we are trying to do and whether

we get it done. There are already some laws on the books that say that we do that, but we don't.

I congratulate you for doing this. I am so pleased that we have Senator PERDUE heading up this effort because, as I mentioned, he has saved some businesses before. They took his advice and reorganized. I think a lot of us have looked at this and said it could be done. It is going to be difficult because we don't even go back and look at old programs—let alone reorganize.

I hope people will pay attention to this and see if they have some other ideas to throw in. But listen carefully to what is being said here today because this has to be fixed.

I was hoping we could fix it before the elections because we were getting cooperation from the other side of the aisle and a lot of good suggestions. One of the reasons we were able to participate in a very bipartisan way, I think, is because none of us knew who was going to be in the majority in the Senate, nor did we know who the President was going to be. I think that made all of us a lot more reasonable. I hope after the elections we can still be reasonable and do something that will save this country.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I thank the chairman for his comments, but more importantly I thank him for his heart in terms of running the Budget Committee and leading us into this observation and recognition. As this chart says, we have a dysfunctional system, and we don't have an alternative but to find a better plan.

With that, I note my good friend and esteemed colleague from Tennessee Senator CORKER is here. He is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, but more importantly he lets me sit next to him on the Budget Committee.

I want to say this about the Foreign Relations Committee. It is a very bipartisan committee. Under Bill Clinton, just 16 years ago, we spent about \$20 billion on the State Department and USAID. Currently, we are spending about \$54 billion. That is just one department. Those are constant dollars to show you how government has sort of exploded in the past 16 years—both under Republican leadership and under Democratic leadership.

I am so glad Senator CORKER is here, and I look forward to his comments.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am thrilled to be here. I thank the Senator for his leadership on this issue. I also thank Senator ENZI for the way he conducts committee business, as the Senator just mentioned.

We are on a committee where basically the way it is set up, it binds both his arms and his legs behind his back, meaning that just the process we have in place makes it impossible for us to deal with our country's fiscal issues. With the Senator from Georgia joining the committee, having been a person who has dealt with businesses throughout the world, and quickly seeing these

frailties that Chairman ENZI has to deal with, the Senator has thrown himself into trying to deal with those issues, and I admire him for it.

I think the Senator from Georgia and I both know this is going to take a while because, in essence, we are talking about a total reorder. We really don't have a budget process. To even call what we do a budget, for most human beings' understanding of what a budget is, is obviously not realistic. So I thank my colleague for that.

I am an advocate for what Senator PERDUE and Senator ENZI are trying to do. We have to, in essence, get a process in place that actually works. That is impossible with the process we have today, and today is the perfect example of that, right? We passed a CR through December 9, and, by the way, we make no policy changes.

Now, think about an entity the size of our Federal Government, where we spend \$4 trillion of the American people's money each year, and yet we don't do the authorization process which lays out policies. If you can imagine IBM or Apple or Google or any company like that just continuing each year to do things exactly the same way and thinking there is going to be a different result, that is not possible.

Worse than that, in spending the \$4 trillion we spend each year, we only have a budget over \$1.2 trillion, \$1.3 trillion, and the rest is on autopilot. It is the part that is on autopilot that is the greatest threat to our country's national security.

So I actually think we need to do two things at once. One is we need to continue working through the processes that Senator PERDUE and Senator ENZI are working on. It will take a while to get that done. We are going to have a total reordering of how we do business. That affects Senate careers and staff, and we understand how difficult that is. We are dealing with human beings. We are dealing with people who have an investment in what they have been doing for years, and it is going to take us a while to overcome the culture that has been established here.

Simultaneously, as my good friend Senator Gregg from New Hampshire had laid out, we also need to begin putting in place policy changes that begin saving our Nation.

One of the problems with the budget process is, we pass a budget that makes assumptions, but those assumptions never become reality. So we say the budget balances over 10 years, but we never do the tough things it takes for those policies to actually be put in place. So a forcing mechanism—I know several thoughts have been put forth—to force us to do that, to force us to do that and to keep government open and functioning is something that has to occur.

I am proudly a part of this effort as a wingman. I appreciate all the meetings that are taking place. I hope we are going to get to a result. I agree with Senator ENZI that it would have

been good to have done it when we didn't know who the President was going to be or who was going to be in the majority. That is not going to happen, but things like this that matter, that save our Nation, take years to happen.

Senator PERDUE is a young Senator here by tenure. These things take a long time. I look forward to working with him to ensure we get the right outcome to save our Nation and to keep us from this moral depravity that is taking place where, in essence, every day that goes by, we are involved in generational theft because we are not doing this. We are really laying a huge burden on future generations.

I yield the floor, and I thank my colleague for his effort.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I thank Senator CORKER very much.

Moral depravity is so prevalent here, and it is no more present and no more important than in the area of funding our military.

I notice Senator ERNST from Iowa is here, and I appreciate her leadership as a fellow freshman in the Senate, but let me highlight one thing very quickly. Senator CORKER just mentioned that about one-third, 30 percent of what we spend—35 percent over the last 8 years—is borrowed, and it is projected that over the next 10 years about 35 percent will be borrowed. About 30 percent of what we spend is discretionary. That means every discretionary dollar we spend as a Federal Government is borrowed. Let me say that again. Every dollar we spend in our discretionary budget is borrowed. That means our military, our Veterans' Administration, our military construction, our domestic programs, all the things we are talking about are borrowed. That means we have to get serious.

We have disinvested in our military because of this budget crisis, and it is just another reason to get at this budget process.

I can't tell Senator ERNST how much I appreciate her being here, and I look forward to her comments.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I would like to thank my colleague from Georgia for spearheading this very important effort. We have heard discussions about getting back to regular order. We have heard discussions about the difference between the debt and the deficit and where do we go as America. So I am glad my colleague is investing his time in this effort, and we look forward to walking through that process.

It is good to see so many of us here today, engaged and very active in this effort, and so I would like to thank all my colleagues. I know a number have already spoken.

Truly, our Nation faces some very serious challenges and challenging budgetary times and all of that coming at us in the future. If we aren't honest about where we are right now and where we are headed in the future and fix it, our children and grandchildren

are going to be handed a very heavy burden.

We are already over \$19.5 trillion in debt and a level that is growing rapidly every single day. I am from Iowa, and back home in Iowa we generally don't talk about things in trillions of dollars or even in billions of dollars. So when you break it down, that debt load represents about \$60,000 per person in this great country. That is quite a number, and one that all of us should be concerned about.

The American people are concerned, and they are frustrated with Washington for a reason. Washington doesn't seem to be serious about stopping the reckless spending habits this town has. That is why I think this proposal is a very interesting one and one that could provide opportunity as we move into the future.

As we stop and look at the reckless spending habits—and most Americans agree we have reckless spending habits here in Washington, DC. I tend to agree with those Americans. I agree. Since coming to the Senate last year, I have worked to cut down wasteful and duplicative spending. Let me give just one example of taxpayer money that has been wasted.

Earlier this year, I introduced a bill that would limit the perks that wealthy former Presidents receive. In 2015, taxpayers spent \$2.4 million on travel, office space, communications, personnel, and other expenses for past Presidents—I might add, wealthy past Presidents. At a time when they receive well-compensated book deals, speaking engagements, and all kinds of activities, hard-working Americans shouldn't foot those bills, and they shouldn't be expected to.

We passed that bill in the Senate and in the House with bipartisan work on that effort. Unfortunately, President Obama decided to veto it. While we are still working on a path forward, it leaves me just as frustrated as all the other Iowans who know we can't continue spending money we don't have on things that aren't necessary.

Washington can't even do the basic business of balancing our own budget. Plain and simple, we should. Families in Iowa do it every day, and they expect us in Washington, DC, to do the same. After all, it is their tax dollars that are being spent, and it deserves to be spent wisely. Unfortunately, it might just take a complete overhaul of Washington's ways to help us solve this problem.

Again, I thank my colleagues for joining us in this effort. While some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have certainly made it very difficult, if not impossible, to conduct business in any sort of regular manner, the reality is excess spending in this town seems too often to be bipartisan.

I know my colleague from Georgia mentioned earlier our debt has ballooned under both Republican and Democratic administrations. We are far too often unable to take a good

hard look at the money that is being spent because we often will get a 1,900-page bill at the last minute, and we are given the choice of either taking it or leaving it. Normally, that is for funding most of our government. That kind of practice doesn't show us a good way forward. It forces us to make difficult choices about how we are spending taxpayer money, and it certainly doesn't give us the opportunity to cut wasteful spending. We have to do better by our taxpayers.

I thank my friend from Georgia and my other colleagues joining us today to help us start thinking about how we solve this crisis and how we can do it in a creative way. I again thank Senator PERDUE for leading this effort, being at the tip of the spear, and hopefully we are moving toward a smarter way of doing business in Washington. If we don't do better, I am afraid the future of this great country will be a lot dimmer.

I thank the Senator and I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I thank Senator ERNST. I enjoy her leadership in the Senate.

With that, I notice Senator ROUNDS of South Dakota is here. He was a Governor who dealt with this budget issue in an executive and legislative body in South Dakota, and I am looking forward to his comments. I thank him for being here.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, first, I want to start by thanking my colleagues here today, particularly Chairman ENZI, who leads the Budget Committee, as well as Senator PERDUE for not only being the only freshman who serves on the Budget Committee but for leading us on the floor in the discussion of this very important topic of our Federal broken budget system.

Once again, today, Congress has just met our deadline to fund the government past the end of the fiscal year. While many of us in the Chamber, as well as the American people, are rightly frustrated by this requirement for a last-minute reprieve, it is a reminder of our broken Federal budget process and why we can no longer afford to continue down this dangerous path.

I spent a great deal of time holding different meetings across South Dakota during August, meeting with folks all over the State. During that time, our soaring national debt and runaway spending has continued to be a concern to me. What I relayed to them about our country's fiscal future and what I would relay to you now is that it is just not very pretty.

I shared with them a report from the Congressional Budget Office, which, in January of this year, released an in-depth analysis of our debt and our deficit. It found that, by 2026, annual deficits will double the share of GDP to 4.9 percent—more than tripling in dollar terms to \$1.37 trillion, or \$1,370 billion, as the chairman of the Budget Committee likes to put it.

It also found that in 2026, just 10 short years from now, 99 percent of revenue that comes into the Federal Government—income taxes, both personal and corporate, all the gas taxes, all the fees—will go back out in mandatory payments and net interest spending, leaving no room to pay for roads, bridges, health care, our Armed Forces, and other vital needs within our Nation. That 99 percent number, as they projected in 10 years, is a crisis. I would suggest to my colleagues that crisis is not in 10 years. That crisis is now.

Earlier, we heard Senator CORKER explain very, very eloquently the fact that it takes time to move things here. I suggest that time is of the essence, and we no longer have a 10-year cycle in which to make these changes. We have to begin the process of fixing this broken system, and we need to begin now.

In 2026, our country turns 250 years old. Wouldn't it be a marvelous goal if, by that time, we not only had this process fixed, but it was actually working once again?

The CBO report concluded that the driver for this rising debt is largely from growing mandatory payments, as we heard our colleagues say. That is Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, as well as interest on our debt. Yet here in the Senate, when we work through the appropriations process to determine the best way to spend Americans' hard-earned money, we don't even vote on mandatory payments, which are mandatory payments on mandatory programs. Today, those mandatory payments account for nearly three-quarters of all Federal spending. That means the continuing resolution we just did is based upon about 28 percent of the total amount we will spend next year. It is simply not acceptable that we continue to look at and try to balance yearly deficits of \$500-plus billion every single year when we only look at 28 percent of the total spending that goes on.

Let me suggest this. In order to fix this, as my colleagues have said today, we have to begin a process with expectations that the process actually works once again and that there are timelines established well in advance of the end of the fiscal year. But even more than that, any process we use in the future also has to bring in accountability, authorization, and appropriations together. Why is it that when we talk about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—well, we just don't talk about it. There is no place in which we can actually sit down in a committee assigned specifically for Social Security, a committee assigned specifically for Medicare, or one for Medicaid. Why is it that, in States like South Dakota, where we have the South Dakota Retirement System—a retirement system which is one of the best funded and best run in the entire United States, and it has been there since the 1970s—it gets looked at every single year. Yet,

as to Social Security, which is such a huge and important part of a lot of people's lives in the United States, we are afraid to touch. It is not a matter of cutting it. It is a matter of managing and making it more efficient and delivering the services and actually keeping it up to date—revenues and expenses—so that the people a generation from now can count on it being there.

It is irresponsible for us to sit back here and to say that we are going to balance our budgets this year and make a commitment without looking at all of the programs that are out there because we simply can't balance a budget. We can't take care of those programs—Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid—unless we actively participate in managing them and in making good decisions. Again, the buy-in from the public is that what we are trying to do is to make it better for them long term and that we have their best interests at heart.

With that, I say thank you. I think this is a critically important thing for all of us. Last year, we did an omnibus bill at the end of the year, and a group of us got together and said no more. In our freshmen bear den, as we call it, we said: It is time we have a meeting with our leadership. I cannot tell you how pleased I was with the reception that we received from our leadership, who said: Look, we agree. You guys work together and put this through. I give Senator PERDUE huge accolades for actually doing the hard work to get this done. This is important to our country, and this is one way in which we can begin to build credibility once again with the citizens of our Nation. I thank the Senator for the work he is doing, and I certainly look forward to working with our colleagues to fix a broken budget system—not only in the Senate but in Congress—and to get on with actually sending back to the American people on a regular basis a budget they believe in and they can count on.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. PERDUE. I thank Senator ROUNDS for his comments. I appreciate his leadership as an ex-Governor in this body.

I note that Senator SULLIVAN from Alaska is here, and he has been very outspoken about this since he got here last year—another freshman Member. I look forward to Senator SULLIVAN's comments.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I thank Senator PERDUE for his leadership on this important colloquy.

As some of us have seen down here, as Senator ROUNDS mentioned, there are a lot of Members of the Senate who are very concerned. But what we are seeing here are a lot of the new Members—12 new Republican freshmen. It is good to see the Presiding Officer, who is one of them. We are very concerned about this. We were concerned because a lot of us ran for office—a lot of us for the first time—because we saw what was going on with this budget process. With all due respect to my colleagues

on the other side of the aisle, they didn't even attempt to pass a budget for a number of years. They didn't even try.

Think about that. You are back home, in a State government such as Senator ROUNDS was talking about or in a household or a business, and you are not even going to try to pass a budget. That was what was going on in the Senate—remarkable. So what we are trying to do is to fix that.

The first thing we did—and Senator ENZI was on the floor a little bit ago—is we came here and we passed a budget. It hadn't happened in years. We passed a budget resolution. That was an important start. Then we started to pass appropriations bills. As a matter of fact, this year, to the majority leader's credit, we started working on appropriations bills at an earlier time than at any time in decades. We got 12 appropriations bills passed out of the Appropriations Committee. Then what happened? We tried to start bringing them to the floor to vote on them, to move them. The vast majority of those bills—all of which were very bipartisan—were filibustered by the minority leader of the Senate.

Again, I am new here. I still don't understand why they did that. A lot of us who came down to the floor were really upset when the minority leader of the Senate filibustered the Defense appropriations bill—the bill that funds our troops—six times in the last year and a half—six times. That is a disgrace, in my view.

So what are we doing here? More delay. More delay. We just got through a continuing resolution, which is not how to run the government, and they were looking at opportunities for more delay. For example, at the very end of this discussion, there was the idea of maybe adding additional funds for Flint, MI. Well, nobody cares about clean water as much as I do. My State has huge challenges with communities that not just have aging infrastructure, like Flint, MI, but no infrastructure. I have over 30 communities in the great State of Alaska that don't have clean water and sewer and don't have flush toilets—Americans—if you can believe that. So I certainly wanted to focus on that. That is what we did in the regular order through the EPW Committee with the WRDA bill—for Flint, MI, the State of Alaska, and other communities that have challenges with clean water. We are going to address those through the regular order.

That is what Senator PERDUE is leading on right now in the Senate—the regular order and getting back to a budget process that can handle the enormous challenges that we have heard about on the floor here—\$20 trillion in debt and exploding deficit. That is what we need to do, and I commend Senator PERDUE for his leadership. What he did is something that takes a lot of courage here—a whiteboard approach. We just need to look at everything anew. With his leadership and his



experience, a number of us lead by Senator PERDUE have been working on this for months. This is what we need to do to finally get ahold of these enormous budget challenges.

I encourage all of my colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—to join in this process, to bring their ideas to fix what is clearly, clearly a broken process that is not helping our Nation, that is driving up the deficit, that is saddling the next generation with trillions of dollars of debt. We have the beginning of a way to start fixing this.

Again, I thank Senator PERDUE and Senator DAINES for their hard work on this. I am certainly going to be part of their important efforts as we look to put our country on a fiscal path of sustainable economic growth and budgets, which we are not on right now.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, Senator SULLIVAN is a warrior. I am glad to be here with him. It gives me hope that we are going to persevere and get this done.

Now to help us close this out, we have our good friend from Montana, Senator DAINES, who has real world experience—both as a consultant but also starting and running a high-tech company. He understands what profit is about, but, more importantly, he understands what meeting needs is about. I am so glad that he can help us close this out. I have a few remaining comments when he finishes, but I thank Senator DAINES for being here.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I thank Senator PERDUE for his leadership.

What an honor it is to be down here on the Senate floor surrounded by freshmen—the freshmen Republican class. We have the Presiding Officer, Freshman CORY GARDNER from Colorado; Lt. Col. DAN SULLIVAN, U.S. Marines, from Alaska; and DAVID PERDUE, who was the CEO of a company before he came to the Senate. We have LTC JONI ERNST from Iowa. I am proud to serve with Joni here and thankful for her service to the country, both in the military and now in the Senate. There are others. MIKE ROUNDS is a former Governor from South Dakota who had to balance his budget there or he would lose his job.

As Senator PERDUE mentioned, when I first came to Washington, I did come equipped with a skill that was familiar to Montanans, like hunting and fishing are, and that is how to balance a budget. Before I came here, I spent 28 years in the private sector, 13 years with Proctor & Gamble and then 12 years with a startup company, and in between that, 3 years in our family construction business. I know what it takes to make a payroll. I know what it takes to make a family's household budget work. Yet balancing the budget is a skill this body has not embraced for nearly 20 years. As Senator PERDUE mentioned, four times out of 42 years has this process worked. That is broken.

Think about this. It is September 28. On Saturday, it is October 1, the begin-

ning of the next fiscal year of the U.S. Federal Government, on which we will spend about \$4 trillion this next fiscal year. We begin the next fiscal year in 2 days without a budget.

We were all here last year at this same point in time—the last week of the fiscal year, the last week of September—and we moved into this fiscal year without a budget. It is no wonder that we are \$20 trillion in debt when you don't have a budget.

There is an old saying in business: If you aim at something, you will hit it. We do not have a budget here, and that has created \$20 trillion in debt.

When the Congressional Budget Office issued its August 2016 report last month, it shared that this year's projected budget deficit now has increased from an already staggering \$439 billion in a January report. They have raised it now to \$590 billion—an increase of 34 percent.

If I were running a business, I could not get away with this. I would be out of business. Serving on a board of a publicly traded company, we would be firing the CEO and we would be firing the board with results like this.

Here is something to think about. Deficit spending is nothing short of age discrimination because this excessive spending is at the cost of our children and grandchildren. That is what we are passing down. We are racking up the credit card debt, figuratively speaking, and passing it on to our kids. The American people are asking themselves: Why aren't the people they have elected able to ensure the future for our children? How can balancing the budget be so difficult?

Being here for 2 years in the Senate, I have come to realize that the biggest hurdles to balancing the budget are the very rules, the very process that guides this institution. They are broken. Unless we fix the process with the leadership of Senator PERDUE, who is getting out in front of this issue—unless we fix that—we will continue to repeat the growing deficits because this process is yielding the results it was designed to deliver. It is unacceptable. It must change.

We are now approaching \$20 trillion, which is 105 percent of GDP. The first bill I introduced when I came to Congress—in fact, I walked down to the Chamber, laid the bill on the desk of the clerk—was called the Balanced Budget Accountability Act. It said simply this: If Members don't balance the budget, they shouldn't get paid.

Let's bring some real-world accountability to this institution. Let's put the pain on the Members of Congress instead of the American people. I thought perhaps if our pay was on the line, it would force us to be held accountable to not only balance the budget but get on track to long-term responsible spending.

If we do nothing, we know what will happen. We will be right back here—mark it on your calendars—the last week of September, and we will be here

debating a CR, pushing it into December with some big omnibus vote. It will happen again, guaranteed, unless we change this process and change the people who serve in this institution. We need action, we need accountability, and we need it now.

In conclusion, I will say this. I have one distinction, perhaps; that is, I am the only chemical engineer who serves in the U.S. House or the U.S. Senate. When you are trained as an engineer, you are trained to take a look at a problem and identify a solution. We have a solution with Senator PERDUE's leadership. You see, the freshmen Members of the Republican class of 2014 came here not to accept the status quo but to reject it and to change the way this country operates; truly, to save the future of our kids and our grandkids.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to reform the budget process. Let's get this country back on the right track.

I say to Senator PERDUE, it is an honor to serve with you. Thanks for getting in front of this very important issue.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I say thank you to Senator DAINES. His leadership means the world here. With that, I have hope we are going to get there.

In light of the time and the hour and the other business that is before this Senate body tonight, I will abridge my closing comments. I want to say this. There is a four-letter word missing in Washington today—H-O-P-E. People sent this class, 12 members of the Republican caucus—that is almost 25 percent of our caucus—are freshmen this year. We ran on this topic, as you heard several Members say, but we had the chairman of the Budget Committee here. We had the chairman of Foreign Relations here.

These people are very concerned about this topic. We are not just complaining about the status quo. Again, we are not complaining about the other side. There are no innocent parties when it comes to this debt crisis. If you look at the last 75, 80 years, this country has lived and benefited from the greatest economic boom in the history of mankind. Yet here we are today, \$20 trillion of debt, over \$100 trillion of future commitments already made by this Federal Government. It is basically \$1 million for every family in America.

We don't need to talk about the need anymore. What we need to talk about is what do we do. That is what we came up here for. We need to focus on results. This is what we are proposing. We put it in language now. We are moving to put it into a bill on the floor. We have Democratic input.

Again, let me say this. The goal is not to solve the debt crisis. That is the need. The goal in this process is to create a politically neutral platform where both sides—whether they are in the majority or the minority—can

make their points during a budget process, move to an appropriations process, and get the government funded every year without all this drama. That is what the people of America want.

It will protect our military. It will protect our national security. It will let us take care of the domestic needs we need, and it will let us invest in our infrastructure to get this economy going again. Without this exercise, we will not start down the path that may take 30 or 40 years to bring this debt under control. It is that large.

Let me emphasize one more thing. If this debt is not addressed soon, the rising interest rates that we all know are coming—we are living in a false world today of zero interest rates. If we just get back to our 30-year average of about 5 percent, we will be paying \$1 trillion in interest. That is not possible. It simply is not workable. All things come into the conversation.

This is what is going to happen. We are going to start debating this on the floor, hopefully soon. It may run into next year. It may go to the following year. My commitment to my people at home is, we are not going to give up on this fight until we get something done about this. We proposed a couple of things.

Three guiding principles were developed by a small group of people, and it has been welcomed by a growing number of people in this body. No. 1, the budget needs to be a law. No. 2, everything we spend—all \$4 trillion of it—needs to go into the budget. They need to be debated and covered in the budget by both sides. No. 3, if we don't fund the government by the end of the fiscal year, there has to be serious consequences.

You heard one proposal tonight by Senator LANKFORD. There may be others, but we are going to put on the Senate and the House, for that matter, real consequences if we don't get the Federal Government budget done. Again, this is an exercise that we hope will be bipartisan. We want no advantage in this. We want a process that doesn't advantage either party. It gives both equal standing in the budget process, leading to a reasonable and effective funding of the Federal Government. A politically neutral platform, that is our goal.

I will close with this. If not now, when? If not us, who? I thank the forbearance of the Presiding Officer tonight. Thank you for allowing us to do this.

I yield back my time. I see we have other speakers on the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The Senator from New Mexico.

(The remarks of Mr. HEINRICH and Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3458 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

# UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 2253

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, too often this body talks about supporting our veterans while doing far too little to pass critical legislation that would actually help them.

The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, of which I am a member—and I am joined by my colleague on that committee, Senator TILLIS, with whom I have worked on a number of issues in our time together in the Senate. Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member BLUMENTHAL have had in this committee perhaps the best cooperation of any standing committee in the Senate. And we continue to work to address challenges facing veterans and the Veterans' Administration.

Through hearings and legislative markups, we have listened and learned from veterans. As a result, we have worked together across the aisle to produce legislation that reflects the needs of those who served our country. It is a minimum we ought to be doing, and I think we are generally doing that pretty well.

One result of our efforts has been the bipartisan Veterans First Act. It is a good bill that comprehensively addresses a host of issues facing veterans, including education benefits, homelessness, health care, and VA accountability. As we see too often, even commonsense legislation like Vets First can't make its way to the floor. Our inability to act on this doesn't mean we shouldn't try to address specific issues that have bipartisan support.

One of those issues which I hope we can agree on is the need to provide relief to veterans who, through no fault of their own, were—there is no other way to say it—bilked by the for-profit school ITT. Veterans and other students were betrayed and bilked, and taxpayers were fleeced. Veterans who were attending ITT at the time of its closure lost the GI bill or VA benefits used to pay for their education. Meanwhile, all other students who were enrolled at ITT were eligible to have their Federal student loans discharged. So if you are not a veteran and you had Federal student loans, you could get those loans discharged. If you are a veteran under the GI bill or VA benefits, you couldn't. It wasn't anybody's intent to do that, but that is what the law says.

I know Senator ISAKSON, the chairman—and we are joined by Senator CARPER on the floor as well—he is interested in this. I also know that Senator TILLIS has cosponsored my bill to actually fix this. This is something we need to do. We are not the only ones who believe action needs to be taken. Governor Mike Pence, the Governor of the State next door to mine, Indiana, who is the Republican nominee for Vice President, supports this.

The closure of ITT was the fault of the management of that school, who spent a lot of money on marketing and a lot of money on helping students get

financing but not much money on education and even less on job placement for their students. The closure of ITT was not the fault of the veterans, for sure, not the fault of the students, but now veterans are worried about being able to pay their rent and pursue their education, which is what this legislation is going to allow them to do. In my State of Ohio, 520 veterans have been impacted by ITT's closure.

There are some questions of finding a way to pay for this legislation, but I believe finding a pay-for is a red herring. We are simply giving the VA the authority to provide relief to veterans. No one is running around trying to find a pay-for for the Federal student loans that are going to be discharged. So we are saying we are just going to do the discharge on the nonveteran students, and we have to find a little legislative sleight-of-hand pay-for to take care of the veterans. That just doesn't make sense. Why should veterans be treated differently or worse than nonveteran students? All we are looking to do is to make sure veterans are treated like all other students who attended an institution like ITT or Corinthian, another scam institution that shut down.

Veterans were promised GI benefits when they signed up to serve our country. ITT has cheated them out of the quality education they earned. If we fail to act today before leaving town, we abandon the responsibility to our Nation's heroes.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2253 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, my colleague from Ohio and I have worked on a number of different measures on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I hope to continue to work with him.

I wish to talk a little bit about the process here. It may seem odd, on a bill on which I am one of the lead Republican sponsors, to come to the floor and object to the UC, but let's talk about structurally what is going on here. We said that the only reason there is a problem is there is no pay-for. In other words, we are trying to pass a policy that we haven't taken the time to make a decision about how to pay for it. We can say that we are authorizing the VA to pay for it, but what are they going to do? We haven't provided them with any funds to do it, so what potentially suffers as a result? That is one piece.

We just heard a number of speeches here with Republican freshmen and a couple of veteran Members on the floor talking about being responsible in the