

for National and Community Service. And second, it will ensure that Indian Tribes remain eligible to compete for national service grants.

I want to applaud the Corporation for National and Community Service for recognizing the need for a tribal liaison over the past year. That office has helped make tribal communities more aware of the opportunities that the Corporation offers.

Making this position permanent will further increase tribal community in all national service programs. In addition, the office would collect information on challenges to tribes to better address tribal program needs.

The amendment places the designation of this position under the duties of the chief executive officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service and would greatly help to develop and enhance programming to address the unique needs of Indian tribes.

The second part of this amendment would ensure that tribal governments remain eligible for nationally competitive grants. Existing law allows tribes to compete for funds with states and national nonprofit organizations. The bill as currently written would remove tribal eligibility to compete for these grants. My amendment merely maintains existing law, and acknowledges Indian tribes as eligible entities for these competitive grants.

As my colleague from Alaska noted, many of the proposed Corps in this act address the very issues which are most critical in Indian Country. Grants under the activities and indicators of the Education, Healthy Futures, Clean Energy, Veterans and Opportunity Corps would provide many volunteers from tribal organizations, States, and national nonprofits numerous opportunities to work on reservations.

My hope is that the Corporation will continue to encourage the use of these Corps on Indian reservations though the proposed strategic adviser for Native American affairs in a way which will help tribal communities and individuals.

American Indians have the lowest level of educational attainment of any racial or ethnic group in the United States. Only 13.3 percent of Native Americans have an undergraduate degree, compared to the national average of 24.4 percent. Volunteers in the Education Corps who offer their time as mentors and tutors in Indian Country could help improve these numbers for our First Americans.

Moreover, the Health Futures Corps could assist with volunteers for individual American Indians who need help obtaining health services or navigating the health care system. The Clean Energy Corps might facilitate volunteers for Indian Country to assist with weatherization of homes on Indian reservations. The Veterans Corps is able to send volunteers to work with American Indian families who have a family member deployed overseas. Finally, the Opportunities Corps could provide

volunteers to increase financial literacy in Indian communities where this assistance is desperately needed.

In addition, organizations who participate in the national service programs, such as the Boys and Girls Club, are active through these national service programs in Indian Country and they provide a much needed positive environment where Native American youth can go to celebrate their culture and community.

I would like to reiterate how important these national service programs are to Indian Country and thank the Corporation for National and Community Service for recognizing that importance. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment to the Serve America Act.

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#### MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Georgia.

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#### THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED BUDGET

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the President's proposed budget.

A real sense of unease is pervading the country right now, and it is not just the stock market or unemployment fears or the housing crisis. There is a genuine apprehension about where our Nation is headed financially.

In my travels throughout my home State this past weekend, I had the opportunity to talk to Georgians from Atlanta, to Waycross, to Blakely, to Macon, and to hear what is on their minds. One of their main concerns is the budget the President has sent to the Hill and the financial hole into which it will put this country, our children, and our grandchildren.

They are right to be worried. The independent, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office released its analysis of the President's proposed budget on last Friday. Its assessment is very troubling. The CBO's estimate for the cost of this budget exceeds that of the Obama administration's estimate by \$2.3 trillion over a 10-year period. By borrowing and spending so much money, the CBO projects that the public debt—the amount we have to pay back to our creditors—will grow to 82 percent of GDP by 2019. The last time that happened, America was paying off a massive debt it incurred from fighting in World War II. According to the CBO, this year, 2009, the total deficit is estimated to hit \$1.9 trillion. By 2018, the CBO projects annual deficits to be more than \$1 trillion every year, and rising. Under the terms of this budget, the annual deficit, in 2013, is slated to be \$672 billion—or more than 4 percent

of estimated GDP. That is one of the largest deficits in American history, but it is actually the smallest projected deficit in this entire budget.

Back in 2004, before he was the President's Director of the Office of Management and Budget, current OMB Director Peter Orszag wrote that repeated deficits of 3.5 percent or more will put this country on an "unsustainable path" and would result in "a related loss of confidence both at home and abroad." He was right. But we are feeling that loss of confidence among Americans now, much less among those whom we are looking to to buy that huge debt we are creating.

To put it plainly, people are worried. These are people such as Phil Perlis, who owns a family clothing business in Tifton, GA. Phil's family has owned The Big Store for almost a century, and it employs approximately 20 people. I know Phil and his family very well. Phil said this is the toughest year he has ever had. He has been "squeezed in every place imaginable." The days of feeling comfortable about making a profit no longer exist, and he simply hopes to be in business this time next year. His confidence is shaken. And given the business climate and the economic issues in Washington—and despite his positive attitude—Phil predicted to me the other day that very trying times are ahead for his store, as well as all other small businesses across America.

He is not alone. Americans, despite the optimism that is our birthright, already feel a sense of disquiet about the direction our Nation is headed economically. As an example, the national savings rate has gone from zero in 2005 to 8 percent today. For the good of their families, Americans are trying to hold on to what they have, not throwing caution to the wind and hoping for a future financial miracle. For the good of our country, our children, and our grandchildren, our Government should do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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#### THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, next week the Senate is going to take up the budget. The budget, of course, is one of the most important documents the Congress considers each year. It is really the blueprint for spending. At the end of that debate in the Senate, hopefully the budget will pass and the same thing will happen in the House. The two Chambers will come together and agree on a spending pattern for the