Last week's budget votes proved what we have been saying throughout this negotiation: We must meet in the middle. The distance between Democrats and Republicans is not measured in money only. I regret to report that so far we remain far more divided on the willingness to compromise.

Democrats have made it crystal clear that we are determined to pass a budget. We recognize the reality that one party alone will not reach a resolution without the other party's cooperation and consent. We have accepted and acknowledged that we need to share the sacrifice. Democrats are willing to find reasonable ways to do that, and we have offered necessary cuts that will strengthen our future rather than weaken it. But we are still waiting for the Republicans to do the same. They are pretending that last week's votes didn't happen. They are covering their eyes and ears to the reality that their proposal—a shortsighted bill the tea party and the Republicans in the House of Representatives continue to support—was roundly rejected in the Senate.

We are still waiting for them to bring something—anything—new to the table. They have not done that yet. Listen to the Republican speeches and sound bites and you will hear no reasonable cuts, no serious offer, no willingness to compromise, and no sense of shared responsibility. You will hear no new ideas.

We can't afford another week of these games. We cannot negotiate through the media, and we cannot negotiate if one side is unwilling to give any ground.

We cannot keep funding the country a couple weeks at a time. How many times have we heard our Republican friends decry uncertainty, claiming it hurts job creation and worries the markets. How quickly they have forgotten their own advice.

Mr. President, it is time to lead. On this point, Democrats have been very clear. I hope the solution is at hand. But if no budget passes—if we cannot keep the country running—it will be clear which side will bear that burden.

This week, we will also start debating another jobs bill. We did the FAA bill, the patent bill, and we are told by the experts that is almost 600,000 jobs. The bill we are going to take up now will help small businesses do what American businesses do best: imagine, innovate, and invent.

Our bill that we will soon discuss will support a research and development program that has helped tens of thousands of small businesses create jobs and shape the future since President Reagan started the program three decades ago.

These investments work. They have helped get new ideas off the ground—everything from the electric toothbrush to a satellite antenna that helped our first responders in Haiti, to technologies that keep our food safe and our military's tanks from overheating in the desert.

One company in Carson City, NV, has used this small business innovation program's support to create technology that helps firefighters reach people on the highest floors of burning buildings. Another Nevada company from Henderson has developed an advanced rechargeable battery that our troops are using in the field. There are success stories such as this in every State because of this legislation that was enacted initially almost 30 years ago.

Small businesses are the laboratories of visionaries who create jobs and cultivate ideas. We, in turn, must help these businesses grow and succeed. That is what this bill will do.

Finally, let me say something briefly about gas prices. This budget debate has shown a stark contrast between our Nation's serious challenges and the lack of bipartisan agreement on serious solutions. The same is true when it comes to energy.

Drivers across the country are watching gas prices go up and up. They are worried about how expensive it is to drive to work in the morning or to pick up their kids from school or just to get to the grocery store and back. It is a serious challenge. But I am disappointed that the Republicans refuse to join us in offering a serious solution.

We know why gas prices are going up. First, the Middle East nations from which we import the vast majority of oil are in turmoil. That hurts production and exports. Second, OPEC and greedy investors control a widely speculative market. Third, big oil cannot quench its thirst for record profits, and it will pursue them at any cost to the consumer.

The Republican reflex is a replay of the same script we have seen time and time again. The Republican reflex is to demand more drilling, as if that will instantly ease the price at the pump. It is an easy argument to make. It will nicely line the pockets of their friends in big oil. It sounds simple, but as a solution to high gas prices, it is plain fiction.

Here is a little-known fact: The United States produced more oil in 2009 than in any year since 2003. So for all of the rightwing's finger-pointing at President Obama, it is worth noting that we have drilled more oil since President Obama has been in office.

In fact, when President Bush was in the White House, field production of crude oil dropped every single year. In his last year in office, prices and oil company profits rose to record highs. So let's retire the tired talking point that President Obama is sitting on the solution.

In fact, it is those same big oil companies that are quite literally sitting on that oil that Republicans demand. Big oil is sitting on more than 60 million acres of Federal land and water that they have leased and have a right to drill on. That means nearly 20 percent of our Nation's oil refining capacity sits idle. They have shown more interest in making profits than in making oil.

Let's pretend for a minute they did do the drilling. Even if big oil drilled on all of its offshore leases, it would have no impact on the price of gasoline during the whole next decade. By 2030, it might lower those prices by 3 cents a gallon. That is not my calculation; that comes from the Energy Information Agency.

Let's not forget the big picture: The U.S. consumes nearly 25 percent of the world's oil, but we have less than 3 percent of the world's oil reserves, and they are rapidly declining. We are addicted to oil and are at the mercy of big oil and OPEC for its price.

Instead of shortsighted straw men, let's use the alternatives we have at home, such as solar, wind, and geothermal energy, which are abundant in places such as Nevada. Let's encourage these investments, not cut them as the Republicans' budget plan proposes. Their budget plan would drastically affect the ability to do more with renewable energy.

These renewable energy sources are cleaner for the environment, wiser for our national security, and more stable for our economy. Best of all, they are made in the U.S.A. and will create jobs in our country.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the morning business time is not divided. It is under the control of whoever gets here; is that right?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to speak for up to 15 minutes. I understand Senator KYL will be joining us shortly.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SBIR/STTR REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. I come to the floor to urge my colleagues to consider voting yes on cloture this afternoon at

5:30, to proceed to a debate on two very important Federal programs that come under the jurisdiction of the Small Business Committee. I know the Presiding Officer has been a leader in his State on this general subject matter. Our committee has worked very hard in the Senate, and in the House I might add, to get these programs ready for reauthorization. They are the Federal Government's largest research and development programs for small business.

As you know, I have said many times on the floor, as chair of the Small Business Committee I want and hope the Federal Government itself would be a better partner with small businesses in America to encourage innovation, to encourage appropriate risk-taking. We can do that in a variety of different ways.

Of course, we have authority over banking systems and capital systems and financial systems. We sometimes do that with just big business in mind. We need to think about giving the 27 million small businesses in America opportunities for capital through the banking system and through nonbank lenders. Our committee has been very busy trying to do our part helping our country out of this recession by continuing to focus on capital access for small business.

We also keep a close eye on regulations that might be dampening small businesses from growing and accelerating. Whether those financial regulations come out of the financial sector or health or EPA, et cetera, we try to keep an eye, in the Small Business Administration itself—in fact, an independent agency inside it, the SBA's Office of Advocacy—to look at rules and regulations. Our committee is going to take a hard look at any rule or regulation coming out of any Federal agencies that miss the mark or that fail to recognize the impact some of those regulations may have on small business. If it is too onerous, we are going to comment and push back.

Another way our Federal Government can be a better partner to small business is to make sure they have access to some of the Federal Government's research and development and technology funds. From the Department of Defense, to the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Commerce, and others, the Federal Government spends literally billions of dollars in research and development. That is good. It is only a small portion of our budget.

Some people argue the research and development dollars are too low because the Federal Government, by investing in research and development wisely, generates and promotes patents, inventions, discoveries, expansion of business, large and small. In fact, America does this probably better than any country in the world and we are proud of it. The Federal Government has a role to play.

This particular program I will focus on today—the Small Business Innovation Research program—was started by Senator Rudman over 25—actually almost 30 years ago now. Senator Rudman was a Senator from New Hampshire. As a Senator from a small State such as New Hampshire, he was, of course, very familiar with the great universities and the great small businesses there. He was actually shocked, and I think dismayed and saddened, to find out that small businesses in his own State had, even if they were inventing some of the best products, and had some of the best technology, couldn't get their foot in the front door to an agency such as the NIH. They didn't want to talk to a small business. They wanted to talk to the universities. They wanted to talk to the big companies. I think Senator Rudman got a little frustrated. He said: I think we need to have not a ceiling but a floor for amount of research agencies do with the small businesses in all of our communities, on Main Streets all over America, and say: What do you have to offer, and we will give you an opportunity.

This works two ways. It is good for small businesses to have access to some of these research and development dollars. It is also important for the taxpayer to get the best bang for their buck they are paying in taxes, and they want the best technology—not just the easiest to access, they want the best technology.

Having invested in this program now over almost 30 years, we have evidence to suggest the taxpayer has, in fact, gotten the best bang for its buck. In fact, these companies I am going to show you will prove, beyond a doubt, what I am saying.

This company, Qualcomm, is a very famous company now, but 25 years ago or so, no one had ever heard of it. Qualcomm is a company based in San Diego, CA. It is publicly owned now, but its founder—Dr. Irwin Jacobs—testified before our Small Business Committee a couple of weeks ago on this program, urging us to do this reauthorization, which is going to take the bulk of the debate on the floor this week—this particular program. He said: Absolutely, positively, Qualcomm would not have been able to launch as a small business that started in his den with about 35 of his friends and associates—not 35 in the beginning, even a smaller number than that—who had come up with the initial technology that made wireless communication possible. They did that, in part, with a couple of SBIR grants, about $1.5 million in total. Without that patient capital invested in a very timely way in this particular company, they would probably not have been able to make it to become what that eventually did become, which is a company that contributes approximately $5.5 billion to San Diego's economy every year and pays in taxes over $1 billion every year to the local, State, and Federal Government. That is half the cost of this program. So one success story out of this program generates enough tax dollars to pay for almost half every year.

This program doesn't cost the Federal Government anything because we are already investing in research and development. What this program does is say you are going allocate 2.5 percent of your research dollars for competition among small businesses—to invest in small businesses just like Qualcomm once was—in the hopes that they will develop into large businesses—or, even more important, that they will develop something that improves the quality of life for Americans and for people of the world.

Most certainly, now that everyone is walking around with wireless technology, using it for any number of things—staying in touch with spouses, kids, from tracking threats to general business use—we know this technology has become a part of everyone's life. Qualcomm is only one example of the return on investment with the SBIR program.

Another involved the pilot alert system for the B–52 bomber. That technology again came out of the SBIR Program. Reauthorizing this program is something we know is important to do to create jobs, to begin to create the kind of jobs that will lead us out of this recession. Innovation equals jobs, technology equals jobs.

There is another success story I would like to share. This is actually from Louisiana. There are actually success stories from every State in the Union. Mezzo Technologies was created with the help of LSU and SBIR. Dr. Kevin Kelly started with two employees. Now his payroll exceeds $1.2 million.

We ran into problems when we invaded Iraq and Afghanistan trying to run our tanks in places that were extremely hot. The radiators we had designed were not sufficient. We were running into serious equipment challenges.

It was this small business, with the help of LSU, that began to develop new kinds of technologies that now can be used for our military, in this case in the Bradley tank. But it also has potential for significant commercial application, potentially in the race car industry. That is an example of how technology needed for a specific problem the Federal Government is having, responded to by small business—not a big company, a small company—new technologies can create the radiators of the future.

Small businesses are the key to putting Americans back to work. They are the innovators. In fact, small businesses account for 13 times more patents than large businesses. Small businesses employ almost 40 percent of American scientists and engineers. Studies show SBIR-backed firms have been responsible for roughly 25 percent of the Nation's most crucial innovations over the past decade.

Unfortunately, and this is why I am on the floor today, this important program that does so much to give taxpayers the full measure and worth of their tax dollar, that gives small businesses the opportunity to grow, to create jobs right here in America—not in China, not in France or in Spain but right here in America—these programs have been sputtering. This particular program has been sputtering on short-term extensions. Every 3 months we reauthorize it—or every 6 months. We need to move forward and provide a longer term extension. The bill we are going to be debating this week provides an 8-year authorization, which gives some certainty. It gives some stability to the 11 Federal agencies that use SBIR to help meet its research and development needs, to help the 300 labs in the United States of America that do primarily research and development for the Federal Government. It sends out a clear signal to innovators: The Federal Government has challenges, the Federal Government has problems, and now we are putting some money behind these challenges and problems and we want you to be part of the solution.

We believe in this program. I wish to thank particularly Senator TOM COBURN for negotiating this 8-year extension, a little bit longer than a normal 5 but less than what some of us wanted initially, permanency and then the 14-year authorization—because we think long-term stability is so important for these programs.

The agencies have to do some more work—our Federal agencies do—to step up their administration of this program, to get even better at putting out the needs of their agencies, identifying small businesses, so we want to give them the confidence this program is actually going to last for more than a few months, 2 years or 3 years or even 4. So this 8-year authorization is important.

I am proud, under my leadership, and also previously under the leadership of Senator SNOWE and Senator KERRY, we have worked very hard together to get this bill into its current form. In the very last hours of the last Congress, we were actually able to negotiate a landmark compromise with the Biotechnology Industry Organization—formally known as the BIO—and the Small Business Technology Coalition. They had been basically at odds over some aspects of this reauthorization. Because we worked very hard and in good faith, both sides came together, we have now achieved a compromise which has the support of the National Small Business Administration, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the NFIB, the National Venture Capital Association, local technology groups, many universities throughout the country, including my alma mater, Louisiana State University, Louisiana Tech, the University of Akron, in Ohio—just to name a few.

I wish to make sure people understand, not only from examples, what this program will fund; in terms of Qualcomm, which was an earlier example, wireless technology, or whether it is a radiator used in military equipment, both in our tanks and sometimes used in other platforms, but also this technology can be used potentially in the racing car industry.

No other SBIR and STTR reauthorization bill has had this much support of this many organizations, and this compromise is represented in the bill we have laid down or we will be passing forward today.

The agencies have been particularly cooperative, particularly Department of Defense, USDA, and the Department of Energy. Along with Health and Human Services, they have the lion's share of these research budgets. DOD, it is not an insignificant amount, it is over $1 billion. The Department of Defense will invest in small businesses to get the best technologies available, such as the radiator technology they need for our tanks.

HHS has $615 million. It is a very small part of their total research budget but an important part, so when they put out the challenge to small businesses in America to come up with the next newest vaccine or the next medical technology or information technology that saves taxpayer money and helps provide better quality of life for all Americans, that word will go out from HHS.

DOE has $150 million available to invest in small business; NASA $125 million, just to name a few.

So not only will the taxpayers benefit, but small businesses and the people they hire as well. Many of these advanced technologies, developed by businesses that could have started in your garage or your den, such as Qualcomm, could not have existed without those programs. They are the brainchild of a scientist who took his idea to the next level, and had this program to get that first $150,000, and then that first $1 million.

I am urging all of my colleagues to support moving to this bill this afternoon. It passed out of the Small Business Committee last week nearly unanimously, and has continued to gain large bipartisan support publicly and privately. The CBO estimates a very modest cost of $150 million over 5 years. We have made changes that have decreased the estimate from last year's cost of $229 million.

We believe this $150 million is a fantastic investment for the Federal Government to place research dollars in the hands of some of the best, most dynamic, most innovative entrepreneurs on the face of the Earth today. We want to give them an opportunity, particularly in tight credit and capital markets, to access these funds at the Federal level to produce the kind of goods and services and, most importantly, jobs for the future.

I see my time has expired. Again, I look forward to coming down with my members of the Small Business Committee to talk more about this bill as the week unfolds. I urge my colleagues today at 5:30 to vote yes for cloture on this important bill so we can pass it out of the Senate today, get it over to the House as quickly as we can, and to the President's desk for signature.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KYL. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE BUDGET

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, we are going to have a vote a little bit later this afternoon to proceed to a bill which I do not happen to think is a very good bill, but I am going to vote to proceed to it, because the majority leader has made clear we will have the opportunity to offer amendments. I know some of my colleagues specifically wish to offer amendments to get to the heart of the subject that should be most on our minds today, which is reducing wasteful Washington spending, to get our fiscal house in order. In order to provide that opportunity, we should, in my view, proceed to that legislation so we can offer those amendments. We should be laser-like focused on the deficit, the debt, the spending of the Congress, and what we can do to get a handle on that spending, so that we do not mortgage our children's future.

It starts, of course, with a budget. A few weeks ago, the President submitted his budget to Congress, but it seems to me the message that budget sends is one of more spending, bigger government, and one that trumps America's well-founded concerns about this huge debt we are piling up and how it jeopardizes our Nation's future.

Under this budget, the debt held by the public will double by the end of this President's term in 2012 and then triple by 2019, to an astonishing $7.3 billion. Think about that for a moment. In all of our history, from 1789, from George Washington through George W. Bush, we accumulated roughly $5 billion of debt. This President's budget, in his first term, will double that. So in the term of President Obama, we will accumulate as much debt as every President of the United States combined before that. That is too much. It will triple in the next 5 years. That is what we are talking about with regard to this budget. The debt is actually going to be larger than our entire economy. Think of the attendant consequences.