

reach an agreement on the deficit and the debt ceiling without compromising the security and the well-being of our seniors. I believe the Democratic Budget Committee's proposed budget is a good model for how we can actually do it, and I look forward to continuing this discussion. It is not necessary, in order to solve our immediate deficit problems and to get through this debt limit fight, to take our seniors and put Social Security and Medicare that they have relied on at risk; to take this country whose prosperity Social Security and Medicare do so much to support, and knock that down with a tax on Social Security and Medicare. It is not right, it is not necessary, and we should stand against it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THANKING SENATE PAGES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, I express my appreciation to you, presiding all these hours you have this afternoon, but I also wish to take just a minute and thank these pages. This is the first time since 1974 the Senate has been in session during a July 4 recess period—since 1974. These young pages had places to be with their families during the summer vacation period. They are juniors in high school. They have some plans, I am sure, that we interfered with. But regarding the work we have done this week, while there has not been a lot of time on the floor, there are a lot of things going on all over Washington. There have been meetings at the White House, there have been meetings with the Vice President, with the President, with the Speaker, and others, working on this very important issue.

When these eight pages in later years reflect back on the fact that they were here the first time since 1974 when we were in session over a July 4 recess period, they should reflect that we were here for important reasons. If we do what is right, we will rein in this debt the country has and protect the most needy of our country.

I apologize for keeping them here. They should not have had to be here this week, but they have stayed because they have an obligation as pages to be here and they accepted that. They have kept the Senate running smoothly. We need them. They are helpful to us. They didn't have to be asked; each one of these eight pages volunteered: Naomi Biden, Brynn DiNino, Claire Karsting, William Maas, Aliza Reisner, Morgan Wissel, Keira Harris, and Chaffee Duckers.

I appreciate very much their service and wish them the best in their edu-

cational endeavors in the years to come.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent 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.

TRIBUTE TO BARRY MANILOW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for nearly 40 years, legendary singer and songwriter Barry Manilow has inspired and dazzled millions of people with his musical talents. He has sold more than 80 million records worldwide and has written countless iconic hits.

However, I come to the floor today not to discuss his talent but to recognize my friend for another one of his remarkable accomplishments—his ongoing efforts to help preserve music education in public schools in Nevada and across this country.

In recent years, significant budget cuts to public education have forced schools to eliminate a number of important programs. Sadly, music programs are often one of the first casualties. In response to this disturbing trend, Mr. Manilow started the Manilow Music Project, which helps public schools continue their music programs. The project donates instruments and materials to public schools and provides music scholarships to high school students to further their music education at the college level. Since 2008, the organization has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of instruments and materials to secondary and high school music programs across the country.

A wonderful example of the impact of the Manilow Music Project occurred last year in Nevada. During one of Mr. Manilow's recent tours in Las Vegas, in exchange for donations of new or gently used musical instruments, he offered tickets to attend one of his concerts. The collected instruments, valued at more than \$500,000, were then donated to fifteen schools in the Clark County School District, the school district that serves the Las Vegas Valley. This gift—the largest donation of its kind for Clark County—has provided more than 600 students with the opportunity to experience the joys of playing a musical instrument.

In addition to his donations to the district, Mr. Manilow has also helped foster music appreciation. He recently invited four different Clark County School District school choirs to perform in his holiday shows and provided show tickets valued at more than \$30,000 for nearly 500 students and their parents or chaperones.

I would like to thank Barry for his dedication to the Las Vegas community and his efforts to keep music alive in Nevada's schools. I am so pleased

that he has been able to share his love of music with thousands of aspiring musicians.

VA'S MENTOR—PROTÉGÉ PROGRAM

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the accomplishments of the 24 participants in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Mentor-Protégé Program who are working to help veteran small business owners. In these hard economic times, it is more important than ever to provide this critical support to our veteran entrepreneurs.

The goal of the Mentor-Protégé Program, which was started in 2010, is to bring together established companies with service-disabled and other veteran-owned businesses. Through these partnerships with established regional businesses, veteran business owners receive guidance on financial and organizational management, business planning and technical aid. They also develop long-term business relationships with their mentor partners.

Veterans hire veterans because they know what they are getting. Veterans are well trained, disciplined team players who can deliver results in challenging conditions. At a time when the Department of Labor reports almost 10 percent of all veterans are unemployed, and 27 percent of veterans between the ages of 20 and 24 are unemployed, it is imperative we do everything in our power to tackle this issue. The Mentor-Protégé program holds the promise of fostering an environment where veteran-owned businesses can succeed in helping to revitalize our economy while hiring veterans in the process. These veteran-owned small businesses are exactly what our Nation needs to continue on the road to economic recovery while getting our country's heroes the jobs they deserve.

While I am optimistic about the potential of the VA's Mentor-Protégé Program, I have heard from several companies participating in the program who have expressed concerns with delays in VA's verification process. I urge VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise to expedite the verification process so that these companies can get to work in repairing our economy as quickly as possible.

Businesses in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Texas, New Mexico, and California are serving as a model of just how successful a program of this nature can be. The names of the businesses that are participating in the program, both as mentors and protégés, are:

ASM Research, Inc. of Fairfax, VA, and Coley & Associates of San Antonio, TX, AUI Contractors, LLC of Fort Worth, TX, and Unified Services of Texas, of South Lake, TX, Bear Construction Company of Rolling Meadows, IL, and Opcon Inc. of Chicago, IL, Booz Allen Hamilton of McLean, VA,

and MBL Technologies, Inc., of Rockville, MD, Creative Computing Solutions, Inc. of Rockville, MD, and CPS Professional Services of Fairfax, VA, EMJ Corporation of Sacramento, CA, and 347 Group Construction of Roseville, CA, The George Solitt Construction Co. of Wood Dale, IL, and Industria, Inc. of Chicago, IL, The GRD Contractors, Inc. of Costa Mesa, CA, and Hubzone Corp. of Rancho Cucamonga, CA, Harris Corporation GCSD of Melbourne, FL, and Delta Corporation of Fulton, MD, Health Net Federal Services of Rancho Cordova, CA, and Three Wire Systems of Vienna, VA, ICF Incorporated of Fairfax, VA, and Nova Technology Solutions of Fairborn, OH, JOB Options, Inc. of San Diego, CA, and VETSUSA, LLC. of Falls Church, VA, Leopardo Companies, Inc. of Hoffman Estates, IL, and Segovia Group Corporation of San Antonio, TX, Lockheed Martin Corporation of Fairfax, VA, and Fulcrum Vets, LLC of Fairfax, VA, Marous Brothers Construction of Willoughby, OH, and Northstar Contracting, Inc. of North Olmstead, OH, McKesson Corporation of San Francisco, CA, and The Stay Safe Store of El Dorado Hills, CA, Metters Industries of McLean, VA, and Global Technology Solutions, LLC. of Corrales, NM, Northrup Grumman Corporation of Rockville, MD, and Heitech Services, Inc. of Landover, MD, Reva, Inc. of Newark, NJ, and M.E.R.I.T. Inc. of Newark, NJ, The Robins and Morton Group of Birmingham, AL, and Coburn Contractors of Montgomery, AL, Roy Anderson Corp. of Gulfport, MI, and the Bacik Group, LLC. of Columbus, GA, Sargent Electric Co. of Pittsburgh, PA, and SGT LLC. Of Pittsburgh, PA, Secom Technical Services of Oak Ridge, TN, and Clauss Construction of Lakeside, CA, Simplex Grinnel of Columbia, MD, and Emergency Planning Management of Stafford, VA, Swinerton Government Services of Arvada, CO, and R.E.M. Engineering Company, Inc. of Pasadena, CA.

By fostering an environment where veteran entrepreneurs can grow their businesses, we affirm our commitment to those who have sacrificed so much. I encourage VA to strengthen the growing Mentor-Protégé Program and look forward to working with them to achieve their goals.

RESPONSIBLE ELECTRONICS RECYCLING ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise to make remarks on the introduction of the Responsible Electronics Recycling Act. I would like to thank Senators SHERROD BROWN and LISA MURKOWSKI for joining me in this bipartisan effort, as well as the House sponsors, Representatives GENE GREEN, MIKE THOMPSON, STEVEN LATOURETTE, and LEE TERRY.

Significant amounts of U.S. electronic waste are currently exported to developing countries that handle the waste in an unsafe manner. Much of

this waste contains toxic materials, such as lead and mercury, and the workers who disassemble and process the electronics use crude, unsafe methods that can lead to health problems. This legislation would put an end to these dangerous practices. The Responsible Electronics Recycling Act would restrict the export of electronic waste, help boost the U.S. recycling industry, and support efforts to domestically recover rare earth materials found in electronics.

The United States is the only developed country that has not ratified the Basel Convention, which prohibits exports of hazardous waste to developing countries. Under the convention, much of the U.S. exportation of electronic waste to developing countries is illegal under the laws of the receiving countries but unfortunately, these laws are poorly enforced.

If we recycled these materials in the U.S., it would create recycling jobs for U.S. workers. Companies recycling in the U.S. often operate under capacity because they cannot compete with the cheaper option of exporting electronic waste to developing countries. We should be processing this waste using U.S. workers, and many companies stand at the ready to begin recycling additional electronic waste.

Moreover, the dumping of used electronics in the developing world can come back to haunt us. Some countries have active underground markets for U.S. hard drives, contributing to identity theft, as documented in a 2009 Frontline investigation. Business Week reported in 2010 that used computer chips from old personal computers are fraudulently re-marked in China as "military grade" chips and sold to U.S. military suppliers. Given the risks to our armed forces from defective equipment, I have also introduced the Combating Military Counterfeits Act to enhance the ability of prosecutors to keep counterfeit goods out of the military supply chain.

One of the benefits of recycling electronic waste domestically is the potential to recover rare elements in the process. Rare earth materials are vital to a number of manufacturing processes, including for products such as hybrid car batteries and solar panels, yet prices have skyrocketed as global supply has tightened. According to the Department of Energy, recycled content from electronics could be a valuable secondary source of rare earth materials, but additional research is required on recovery techniques and collection of electronic waste. This act would establish the Rare Earth Materials Recycling Research Initiative at the Department of Energy to coordinate research into the recovery of rare earth materials used in electronics.

The Responsible Electronics Recycling Act would also address the health, environmental, and national security concerns by amending the Solid Waste Disposal Act to prohibit the export of electronic waste to developing

countries, with certain exceptions. These exceptions include legitimate exports of tested and working equipment, warranty returns, and recalls. There is also a de minimis exception to allow the export of materials that have so little toxicity they would not pose a risk to human health or the environment. Exporting under the exceptions would require a license and notice to the Environmental Protection Agency. Additional restrictions apply to exports for warranties or recalls, including written consent from the receiving country. The act creates a criminal penalty for knowingly exporting electronic waste, and provides the EPA the authority to inspect establishments handling electronic waste.

Twenty-five States, including Rhode Island, have passed electronic waste recycling laws. States such as Rhode Island already seek to ensure that their downstream recyclers do not export the electronic waste but instead responsibly recycle it here in the U.S. But States can only do so much and a federal law is needed to restrict these harmful exports.

We are pleased to have the support of a number of electronics manufacturers and retailers, including Hewlett Packard, Dell, Apple, Samsung, and Best Buy. We are also pleased to have the endorsement of 29 recyclers representing 74 recycling operations in 34 states. The breadth of our coalition is a testament to the consensus that the harmful export of these products must stop.

With more and more Americans relying on new technologies and generating a growing amount of electronic waste each year, we must take steps to properly dispose of this material. This legislation will crack down on the dumping of electronic waste on developing countries, protect American consumers from counterfeit schemes and identity theft, and support the growth of electronic waste recycling jobs in Rhode Island and across the country.

REMEMBERING JOHN MACKEY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, Baltimore lost one of its most beloved adopted sons last night, former Baltimore Colt tight end John Mackey. John revolutionized the position and was the second tight end to be enshrined in the National Football League's, NFL, Hall of Fame. He became the first president of the NFL Players Association, NFLPA, after the NFL merged with the old American Football League. He was a tenacious and effective advocate for the players, bargaining for higher salaries and better benefits. He organized a 3-day strike early in his tenure that generated an additional \$11 million in pensions and benefits. Mackey also filed and won an antitrust lawsuit against the NFL which eliminated the so-called "Rozelle Rule" and ultimately paved the way for players' union to secure full free agency for its members.