

safer for the law enforcement official as well as the person being confronted?

There are better ways for us to respond effectively at the early signs and help to train the people who are in the best position to identify people who need help early on. This legislation includes specialized training for those on the frontlines, such as law enforcement and judicial officials, so they are ready to respond and can react swiftly and safely should a mental health crisis erupt.

The truth is that this is a difficult issue and one that raises hard questions. But I am grateful to Chairman GRASSLEY of the Senate Judiciary Committee for not shying away from this topic but embracing it and having witnesses such as those we will have tomorrow who I think will open the eyes of many people to something they perhaps don't encounter in their daily lives because they don't go to our jails or our prisons or they don't have a loved one who suffers from mental illness. I think this will open a lot of eyes, and it will help us continue the conversation so we can find some common ground and work toward real solutions.

Reform is long overdue. All you need to do is visit our jails, as I have done in Harris County, Bexar County, and Dallas County, to see that too often our jails are occupied by people who—yes, they may have committed petty crimes, nonviolent crimes, but they really need some help. If we give them the help, they can turn their lives around and become more productive.

It will save taxpayers money, and I think it will be a much more humane and efficient system of dealing with people suffering with a mental health crisis. I am hopeful we can advance substantive legislation to help those struggling with mental illness and their families and, as a result, make our communities safer.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS ENFORCEMENT BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the bill that will be coming before the Senate this week, the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act, which seeks to curb North Korea's unacceptable behavior through the implementation of targeted sanctions.

On January 6 of this year, North Korea tested a nuclear weapon in open violation of numerous U.N. resolutions. This is the fourth time North Korea has conducted a nuclear weapons test, and it is estimated the country may

have as many as 20 nuclear warheads in its arsenal.

Just this past weekend, while many Americans were getting ready to watch the Super Bowl, North Korea conducted a missile test, putting a satellite into orbit. This missile test, which has already been condemned by the U.N. Security Council, served as a demonstration of the threat posed by North Korea's long-range missile program. In fact, just a few hours later, the satellite launched by the North Korean missile passed over the site of the Super Bowl in Santa Clara, CA.

If equipped with a nuclear warhead, a missile similar to the one launched this weekend could potentially threaten the United States and our allies, and North Korea is actively seeking to market this same missile technology, as well as its nuclear weapons technology, to other rogue regimes.

North Korea's history of aggressive behavior is already well known and well documented. In March of 2010, a North Korean torpedo sank the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan*, killing 46 sailors. In November of 2010, North Korea fired artillery on the island of Yeonpyeong, killing two soldiers and injuring an additional 15 soldiers and 2 civilians.

North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Un continues to spout threats against the United States and our allies. This past year, when South Korean citizens sent leaflets with unfiltered information into North Korea, the regime responded with threats to turn the whole of South Korea into a "sea of fire." After the January nuclear test, a North Korean spokesman said: "North Korean scientists are in high spirits." The statement went on to claim that North Korea detonated an H-bomb, which we now know to be untrue, and added that the bomb was "capable of wiping out the whole territory of the U.S. all at once." These threats are so common now that they barely make the news.

North Korea is not only a threat to the United States, it is also a threat to its own people. It is estimated that 150,000 to 200,000 North Koreans are imprisoned in concentration camps. We can confirm the existence of these camps from satellite photographs and firsthand accounts. These are not camps for what we would consider criminals but for individuals deemed disloyal to the regime. The "crime" of a single family member—which can be something as simple as accidentally tarnishing the photo of a member of North Korea's hereditary dictatorship—can lead to an entire North Korean family being sent away to a labor camp.

The brutality of these camps has been confirmed by those who have made it out. To date, more than 28,000 North Korean defectors have escaped and made it to South Korea. Tens of thousands more are still in China, often working as cheap laborers who become victims of human trafficking.

The stories of those who have escaped Kim Jong Un's regime carry a

common theme: starvation, imprisonment, torture, and the execution of family members. And this is everyday life for the people of North Korea.

The bill we are considering this week seeks to curb North Korea's aggressive behavior through the use of targeted sanctions. The bill restricts access to financial resources and raw materials that North Korea uses to support its nuclear weapons program and operate its political prison and forced labor camps. It levels mandatory sanctions against individuals who contribute to North Korea's ballistic missile development and targets luxury goods the regime uses to maintain the loyalty of party elites. It also puts in place sanctions against any entity determined to be enabling North Korea's ability to censor information, as well as those engaged in money laundering, narcotics trafficking, and counterfeiting. The bill also includes discretionary sanctions that the U.S. President could use to target entities assisting North Korea in misappropriating funds for the benefit of North Korean officials. The President would have to justify any waivers of these sanctions on a case-by-case basis. The bill also codifies into law the Presidential Executive orders issued in 2015 following the cyber attack on Sony Pictures.

This is a multifaceted bill designed to target North Korea's weapons programs, human rights abuses, and the finances of government elites. And it will do so with minimal impact on the lives of everyday North Koreans who continue to suffer at the hands of their own government.

Last week I introduced legislation addressing another threat posed by North Korea. As I stated before, North Korea is actively seeking to market its nuclear weapons technology to other rogue regimes. In fact, the Syrian nuclear reactor destroyed in 2007 is based on a North Korean design. My bill would ensure that North Korea can't sell its technology to another rogue regime—Iran.

Although President Obama's nuclear deal seeks to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, many of us remain skeptical. And with the North Korean regime strapped for cash, its nuclear weapons and missile technology are some of the few commodities it can offer, and it actively tries to market them to other rogue regimes.

My bill seeks to prevent Iran from becoming a potential customer for North Korea's nuclear weapons technology. Under my legislation, if Iran attempts to acquire nuclear weapons technology from North Korea, all sanctions waived or suspended as a result of the President's nuclear deal would be reinstated immediately. A nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable.

Regardless of what the President claims his Iran nuclear deal has achieved, we must remain vigilant and ensure that Iran keeps its end of the agreement and does not go after a nuclear weapon.

I am glad the Senate is addressing the threat posed by North Korea. A similar version of the North Korea sanctions bill that we are addressing this week recently passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 418 to 2. I hope we will see similar bipartisan support for the bill here in the Senate. We should not compromise the national security of the United States with disputes between our political parties. I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle feel the same and will join me in moving this bill forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

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

#### BUDGET REFORM

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, today the President of the United States unveiled the last budget of his Presidency: \$4.1 trillion. Of that, \$1.1 trillion is discretionary spending, which is the amount Congress will discuss over the next few months.

It is no big secret that Presidential budgets typically are dead on arrival—this one especially so, obviously, as it is the last one of the President's term. It is a requirement of the 1974 Budget Act. The President turns in his budget by the first Monday of February. It is actually now into the second week. It is a week late, but it is closer to on time than the budgets of other Presidents have been in the last few years.

There are a lot of wish list items in the President's budget. It also includes about \$3.4 trillion in new taxes over the next 10 years. It increases spending by \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years, including next year. The challenge in the President's spending plan is that he increases spending so much that we also continue to increase the deficit, the debt, and our interest payments.

This body should realize that on the current track, the Congressional Budget Office and the President's budget that he released today forecast that within the next 10 years, the United States of America will spend more on interest on our debt than we spend on national defense. I want everyone to soak that in. Within 10 years, the Federal taxpayer will spend more on interest on our debt—our debt payments—than we spend on national defense.

When the President came into office, there was \$10.6 trillion in total debt. The President's budget lays out a plan that by the end of his budget, there will be \$27.4 trillion in total debt. This is an issue for us, and it continues to accelerate. And until this body and until the House and until the White House agree this is a problem, it will not be solved.

I don't want to say this flippantly; the President and I have had this conversation. He does not believe that increasing deficits—that is, overspending what we bring in—is a problem. He believes, as he has shared with me and with the American people publicly, that if the government overspends a little bit, that stimulates the economy. Well, that might be true in some economic formula, but when our interest payments are larger than total what we spend for defense, we are in a spiral that we cannot sustain.

We cannot keep saying we will add more debt every year and there is no reckoning for that. Our total debt right now exceeds our gross domestic product. Literally, if we took from every single American in the entire country all of their income for the entire year we could not pay off our debt.

We are very much at a tipping point. The problem Congress faces is Congress never seems to act until we have to, and, in this time, in an economic crisis, when we have to, it is too late. How do we get on top of that? How do we stop bragging about how much the deficit has been cut and actually start reducing our debt? Many Americans don't hear the difference between the debt and the deficit because they don't live in this world of all of these different terms. Deficit is how much we overspend in any one year; debt is the accumulation of all of those deficits.

Washington continues to talk about how in the last 6 years we have cut the deficit by \$1 trillion. And that is a good thing, but the problem is that in the last 10 years, the debt has also doubled as deficits are still so large every single year, and that is a problem.

So what do we do with this? I would say there are multiple things. No. 1, we are not going to get out of this in any one time period. This body needs to understand that this is not a car payment we are paying off. This is a really big jumbo mortgage. We are not going to pay this off in 1 year, and we are not going to fix it in one stroke. This is going to take multiple years of picking away at this.

I have reminded several of my colleagues of one sobering fact: If we were to balance our budget and set this 10-year time period to actually balance the budget, if the next year after the balanced budget we had a \$50 billion surplus as a nation, it would take 460 years in a row of \$50 billion surpluses to pay off our debt. For twice as long as we have been a country, if we had a \$50 billion surplus every year, we could pay off our debt. At some point we have to admit this is a really big issue.

CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, as all of us know in this room, continues to rattle us and remind us that this debt is continuing to grow and we do not have the resources to do it. For the first time since 2009, our deficit will rise again next year to \$544 billion. That is up 24 percent from just this last fiscal year. As we continue to have more individuals who retire and

use Medicare and Social Security, which they have set aside their entire life to go into, and as that number continues to rise and as discretionary spending continues to stay fairly capped, we are not getting on top of the big issues that we face.

Where do we go from here? In 1974 this Congress created the Congressional Budget Act, which set up the process of how we would actually do our budget every year. It is a very interesting process with the House and Senate passing budgets, putting them together, going through the process and getting everything to the President. All the timing and everything was set up with appropriations bills and how they would be done with all the deadlines. Interestingly, since 1979, the Congressional Budget Act, in the way that it was set up, has only worked two times—twice since 1979. Would anyone else admit that there is a problem with that setup? Coming out of Watergate in 1974, they wanted more transparency and an open process doing the budget. So they created this process that is so cumbersome that since 1979 it has only worked twice.

To give more up-to-date details, in the last 10 years we should have passed 118 appropriations bills. Of the 118 appropriations bills, only 7 of those individual bills were passed on time. We have a problem just in basic process.

So allow this Senator to just throw out a few ideas to recommend to this body that we consider. If we are going to fix our debt and deficit, we have to look at the process of executing our budget to fix it.

Here are a few thoughts. A biennial budget—if we don't do a budget every year, we should do a budget every 2 years. We are dealing with trillions of dollars. We should do a little bit of advanced planning. We should be able to do that at least 2 years in advance to be able to lay out how we are actually going to do the spending. We could do appropriations every single year to be able to provide the accountability, but at least the major budget process we should do every 2 years.

We should get rid of the budget gimmicks that dominate this body in how we "balance our budget." Budget gimmicks such as pension smoothing, corporate timing shifts, and all of our favorites—CHIMPS, or changes in mandatory programs, which everyone outside of this city thinks is a monkey, and everyone inside this city knows it is a great budgeting technique.

Here is how some of these work. Here is an example from October's budget agreement. A pension payment acceleration in section 502 changed the due date for pension premiums from October 15, 2025, to September 15, 2025, in order to get \$2.3 billion into the ten-year window. Now what just changed there? They moved the payment time 30 days forward and so that is when it is due. Since they moved it 30 days forward 10 years from now, suddenly that is another \$2 billion into the Federal