

For Immediate Release

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Washington, DC—Today, U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, spoke on the Senate floor to introduce the Senate Substitute Continuing Resolution.

Audio is available here.

Video is available <u>here</u>.

The Chairwoman's remarks, as delivered, are below:

"Thank you, Mr. President. I'm rising to speak on the Continuing Resolution to keep the government functioning for the rest of the year.

"I chair the full Appropriations Committee. My very able and esteemed colleague, Senator Shelby, is the Vice-Chairman. We come to the Senate floor today to talk about our legislation, which is an amendment to the House C.R. to fund the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year. It continues the bipartisan tradition of the Appropriations Committee, working closely with both sides of the aisle. I want to thank Senator Shelby for his excellent cooperation and his wise counsel in doing this and actually co-sponsoring this.

"Our leadership, Senators Reid and McConnell, have really been critical to allowing this to come to the floor to be debated openly, to have appropriate amendments and be voted on by the full Senate.

"In today's toxic environment in Washington, I must say our conversations have been characterized by civility, collegiality and absolute candor. What can we do and what can we not do. Not what we'd like to do but what we must do to keep the government doors open.

"I want to comment on the excellent tone and conversations that we've had with the House. Specifically, our House counterparts Congressman Hal Rodgers, the Chairman over on the House Appropriations Committee, and Congresswoman Nita Lowey. We've talked with each other, we've worked together and if we continue to do that without intervening dynamics, we can get this bill done.

"Now, Mr. President, before I go into our bill to offer the content, I want everybody to understand there are three things at play in Washington this week. We use arcane language so nobody knows what's going on. So there's the sequester, there's the Continuing Resolution and there's the Budget Committee. So everybody is going to get confused. Everybody is getting it commingled. And all of it is getting press and the American people don't understand that there are three separate solutions to three separate problems.

"Let me go to the Budget Committee which will be on the floor next week and which Senator Murray is assiduously and persistently working on her bill. That is for fiscal year 2014. That is the framework on how we're going to approach our overall budget. What are we going to spend? What, if any, revenues are we going to have to raise? And also a review of mandatory spending. That's going on over there. That's for fiscal year 2014.

"What the Mikulski-Shelby Continuing Resolution is, which is really the Appropriations bill not a personality bill, is legislation that will fund the government through 2013. The American people should say, 'Didn't you do that in October? Isn't our fiscal New Year's Eve on October 1?' Well, not really, because what happened is we were going into the heat and passion and prickliness of an election year. It was the wise head to extend it where cooler heads would prevail into March. Well, here we are. We're the cooler heads and we're ready to prevail. And what we have here is the legislation.

"On March 27 that Continuing Resolution expires. If we do not pass our bill and then have an agreement between the House and the Senate that is signed by the President, we could face a government shutdown. Now there is no will on either side of this institution that wants to do that. We are absolutely committed to no shutdown, no showdown, no lockdown, no slamdown. We want to do the job. And that's why we've been working very carefully to do that.

"What we will offer here today is funding through the fiscal year, which will take us through October 1 -- that meets the mandatory cap assigned to us by the Budget Committee of \$1.043 trillion. That's a lot of money. But it is a big government with big responsibility. It includes everything from defense, defending us over there, to the border patrol, defending us here, to meeting compelling human need and making investments in science and technology while ensuring that we do what we need to do.

"Our legislation is quite simple and straightforward. It includes five Appropriations Bills. Two are already in it from the House, Defense and Military Construction and Veterans. It will also include Agriculture, Homeland Security, and a subcommittee that Senator Shelby and I are Chair and Vice Chair of that funds the entire Justice Department. That means F.B.I., federal law enforcement, science, and commerce. So we have Agriculture, C.J.S., Homeland Security and Defense.

"Defense and Military Construction are identical to the House. Agriculture, C.J.S. and Homeland Security are consistent with bipartisan and bicameral agreements negotiated last fall. We're reaching across the aisle. We're reaching across the Dome. That's how we're trying to do it. However, there are seven remaining bills in the Continuing

Resolution. They are Energy and Water, that's money for the Corps of Engineers, Interior and Environment, Financial Services, Transportation, Labor HHS, State-Foreign Ops and the Legislative Branch.

"It includes some very limited changes to fix pressing problems. These are called anomalies. The Senate version totaled \$1.043 trillion, equal to the House C.R. So the top line is the same. It's how we achieve our national goals. It is equal to the House Continuing Resolution. And it is the same as required by the Budget Control Act. We are in absolute compliance with the Budget Control Act. Now, sequester mandates another \$85 billion in cuts. That comes over what we do, and that solution is to be negotiated by the President and the Leadership, with the concurrence of both bodies. That's part of the charm offensive that's going on. Sequester needs a balanced solution and we will be listening and awaiting their ideas.

"But right now what we are looking for is our bills that include bipartisan amendments, minimize the problems of operating and return to regular order for fiscal year 2014. The amendment that we offer is much better than an extension of the current Continuing Resolution. Our bill makes reforms. We actually get more value for the dollar. If we just extended it, we would sometimes be spending money on unneeded programs. For example, the C.J.S. bill included \$500 million for a space shuttle that doesn't exist. We want to change that and put it where it belongs in properly defending the nation and investing in science and technology. So a date change in the Continuing Resolution is just not workable.

"The Senate Amendment improves the House C.R. by adding those three domestic bills and includes a number of changes. I could go through each and every one of those changes, like in Agriculture. I want to explain the process. I do want to explain the content of the Senate bill. However, what I'd like to do is take a minute now and yield to Senator Shelby for his opening statement and then I'd like to be able to come back and explain the details of actual funding.

"But I must say what I appreciated was not only the civility and the collegiality but the candor. We had to look at not what we would like to do and not even what we should do, but what we must do to keep the government operating in order to achieve the national goals that America wants. Our national security, those who wear the uniform of the United States military and others who defend the nation like border patrol, federal law enforcement, local law enforcement. Food safety and drug safety inspectors, to make sure we meet the compelling human need in the fields of education, biomedical research. This is what we're trying to do. Weather satellites that predict future natural disasters.

"So again we don't have a bill here that's what we would like to do. But we have a bill that's what we must do. And if we all work together, we ask those who have amendments to be working with our leadership, we believe that we can move this bill by the middle of this week. That by the week's end, the certainty of government funding will be established and we can show that we can govern. I think we can get this bill done this week, and I intend to.

"Mr. President, I yield the floor so that my Vice Chairman can say what he wishes to do to add to the debate."

Following Vice Chairman Shelby's remarks, Chairwoman Mikulski continued her statement:

"For the Continuing Resolution, we need everybody's cooperation. If Senators have amendments, bring them to us and also to the leadership that's helping us negotiate which ones will come up. I think we can get this bill done this week, and we intend to. But now I'd like to say why getting it done is worthwhile.

"I want to speak about the Agriculture bill. I'd like to speak about some of the content that we have in this bill and do it in alphabetical order, because it's easier for folks to follow. In Agriculture, our amendment really makes sure that we help fund the Food Safety Modernization Act, which is not included in the House bill. What this does is help fund the first major reform of food safety laws in 70 years. And it's much-needed. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) tells us 48 million Americans suffer from food borne illness each year. This morning, before I came to the floor, I attended a hearing on the Select Committee on Intelligence. General James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, along with key people from the military, civilian agencies, and FBI Director Mueller, gave us a 30-page report on threats to the United States. One of the things they talked about was the safety of our food supply. We need to make sure we have inspectors on the ground for what might occur through bacteria or what might also be introduced. We need to understand that food safety is a big issue.

"This amendment is also better than the House bill in improving clean water to rural communities, and provides 165 rural communities with clean water and waste disposal, creating construction jobs today and improving community health tomorrow. I represent over 2,000 miles of the Chesapeake Bay coastline -- along with Senator Cardin. We have older communities. We have issues related to wastewater treatment that are not only polluting the Chesapeake Bay, but are very difficult to repair because of the very nature of our population. I'm talking about wonderful, patriotic people who don't have a lot of cash to pay a lot of taxes for wastewater disposal. But in helping them, we improve public health, and we save the Chesapeake Bay, with all its seafood industry. That's just Maryland. But we could go everywhere and find similar stories.

"On Commerce, Justice and Science, that's the subcommittee I chair, it goes to everything we're talking about: about justice, about jobs today and jobs tomorrow. When we look at our Department of Commerce, which should be the point of contact for American business, really promoting private-sector initiatives and, most of all, promoting exports. Not sending jobs overseas, but sending American products and American services overseas. That's where the trade negotiation goes. This is part of our economic vitality. This is where we have bipartisan agreement. Let's engage in free and open and fair trade. That negotiation staff is funded through our subcommittee, and they know we don't want to send jobs overseas.

"In the Department of Justice funding, we fund federal law enforcement and provide funds to local communities on a competitive basis to put cops on the beat and to give them the appropriate things they need to protect themselves. As an example, let's look at the Byrne Grants, the main federal tool that helps state and local law enforcement. The Senate bill provides more money. That means more money for body armor, more money for cops on the street to learn the latest tips in stopping the gang threat. It provides for the cops on the beat. "Both of those are modest increases over the House funding. When I say "modest," you know what I'm talking about? For everything that local law enforcement does, we're going to provide \$15 million. That's not a lot of money by Washington's terms, but to the local police departments, it will be a help.

"Commerce, Justice and Science also supports innovation. It is in this subcommittee that funds the National Science Foundation. The Senate bill provides \$220 million more than the House CR, which means that we will be able to provide more help to 7,000 scientists and teachers making new discoveries for new products that will lead to new companies and new jobs. This is what the Commerce, Justice and Science bill does.

"We're better than the House also in Homeland Security. This amendment does more to protect the nation from cyber warfare. Cyber warfare is one of the greatest threats facing America. Again, in this 30-page report that we got on threats, the first five pages were devoted to all of the cyber problems. What kind of cyber problems? Cyber attacks, cyber espionage, and the growing nexus between organized crime and nation-states, hacking, stealing our state secrets, our trade secrets. And human trafficking in women, where you sell women and children as a commodity across the borders of the world through organized crime and corrupt government officials. You'll also sell other kinds of things, including weapons of mass destruction. This is where we need to fund Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the FBI, our contribution to Interpol. All of that is in the bill, and we do better than the House CR. We are frugal. Again, not what we would like to do, but what we must do.

"Also under Homeland Security, we make sure we look out for those things that put people in harm's way. In my own state and in others, there is the issue of fires. Now, most fire departments in big cities are run by professionals. But in most rural communities, they're run by great volunteer fire departments. We have a fire grant program that I helped start that trains and equips local firefighters. What we do here is we provide more money, \$33 million above the House, to help provide those grants. We also provide additional funds to help state and local fire departments.

"In the area of compelling human need, I want to talk about the subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. This is the subcommittee that funds compelling human needs. And what do we do here? We look out for child-care and development block grants. We support care for 9,000 more children. And we also make sure we adequately fund Head Start and provide a modest increase. In addition to that, we also provide more money to the National Institutes of Health, \$71 million. Now put that into context that they're going to take a \$1.5 billion hit with sequester.

"Mr. President, I know you represent a great state. You represent Hawaii. Who wouldn't love Hawaii? But I wish you'd look at Maryland. You'd be crazy about Maryland. Not only do we have the wonderful Chesapeake Bay, a Super Bowl championship, but we have other Super Bowl winners. They're called the National Institutes of Health, the National Security Agency, the National Weather Agency.

"Just the other day when I was over at NIH they told me, and told America, that NIH, working with clinicians and the private life science sector, has reduced cancer rates in the United States by 15 percent. That's a 15 percent reduction in breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer. It's all that wonderful research going on at the Bethesda campus and in academic centers of excellence all over America. But instead of pinning medals on those people and encouraging young people to come into science, we could end up giving them a pink slip. What are we doing? I not only want to lower cancer rates, but I want to improve and raise the discovery rate.

"This is what we do in the CR. We are working on a bipartisan basis. This is helping the American people, helping to give us products that are approved by the FDA that we can sell and ship around the world, particularly to countries that could never do it themselves.

"I'm all about jobs, jobs today and jobs tomorrow. That's why what we do in Transportation, Housing and Urban Development is also a big step forward. In addition to looking out for the homeless, we provide an additional amount of money for highway and road safety programs, where people actually work with funds going to states at the local level. Not some shovel-ready gimmick, but actually identify projects in the pipeline. We can generate jobs in construction. We can improve public safety by working on smart highways. And – literally -- we can help get America rolling again.

"I could go on about this bill. This is a general outline, and I will talk more about it. I feel very passionately about it because we have pinched every nickel. We've looked at it very assiduously to make sure we are within our mandated spending cap. We've assessed our national priorities; national security, compelling human needs, how we can create jobs, and look out for the middle class, and make those investments that improve the lives of the American people and generate jobs.

"I think we have a very good bill. I ask everyone's cooperation to get it passed. Mr. President. I vield the floor."