

residents, to dealing with over \$250 million in budget cuts when the economic downturn hit. Through the highs and lows, Walt Ruffles has worked to give the school district, its teachers, and students the consistency that must accompany a quality education.

The recognition of his work has gone far beyond the borders of the Silver State. Just this year, he was one of the four finalists for National Superintendent of the Year, awarded by American Association of School Administrators. In making their selection, the judges cited student achievement, his empowerment program, fiscal responsibility, and staff development in the nation's fifth largest school district. I congratulate him on this honor and appreciate all the improvements he has brought to the district.

I join with my fellow Nevadans in honoring Walt for his great work as Superintendent of Clark County Schools. "My whole obsession in Nevada has been to increase the number and quality of our graduates," he once noted. For that, we will always be grateful.

DREAM ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the upcoming cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the DREAM Act. I have great sympathy for students brought to the United States at a very young age who have no moral culpability for being in this country in violation of our laws. I have listened to many stories about how our broken immigration system has failed these students, and I have discussed this issue with many Hispanic leaders in Texas and across the Nation.

Last week, we learned that the unemployment rate went back up to 9.8 percent in November—and more than 15 million Americans cannot find a job. In the Hispanic community, things are even worse. The unemployment rate is up to an astonishing 13.2 percent the highest rate in 27 years. And it has been above double digits every month since the stimulus bill became law in February 2009.

That's why I agree with my Republican colleagues that the only items on our agenda during this lameduck session should be time-sensitive issues focused on the economy. Those time-sensitive issues include passing a continuing resolution to keep the government running, as well as preventing the largest tax hike in U.S. history. Everything else that can wait should wait until the new Congress convenes in January.

Nevertheless, I do have sympathy with students who would benefit from the DREAM Act. And that is why I voted for a version of this legislation in the Judiciary Committee in 2003. But as I said then and continue to say today: it is important to get the details right with sensitive legislation like this.

Unfortunately, the version of the DREAM Act before us has several problems we have identified previously over the last several years. Under this version of the DREAM Act, a 30-year-old illegal immigrant with only 2 years of post-high school education would be eligible for a green card—regardless of whether he or she ever earned a degree.

Under this version of the DREAM Act, a thirty year old illegal immigrant who has been convicted of two misdemeanors would be eligible for a green card—and let's remind ourselves that many misdemeanors are not minor offenses. In many States, they include: driving under the influence; drug possession; burglary; theft; assault; and many other serious crimes. In New York, "sexual assault of a minor in the third degree" is a misdemeanor offense. Someone with two convictions for any of these crimes would be eligible for a green card under this legislation. And that doesn't even include people who are prosecuted for felonies—but who plead guilty to a misdemeanor as part of a plea agreement.

This version of the DREAM Act also has very weak protections against fraud. As we saw in 1986, any time we expand eligibility for an immigration benefit we will create a new opportunity for fraud if we are not careful. Yet this bill actually protects the confidentiality of a DREAM Act application—even if it contains false information.

These are just some of the problems in this version of the DREAM Act that should have been debated in the Judiciary Committee, and subject to amendment under the regular order. None of these concerns with the DREAM Act are new, by the way. Like other Senators, I have made clear for years my concerns about loopholes for convicted criminals as well as protections against fraud.

Washington's credibility is the obstacle to broader immigration reform and rushing a flawed version of the DREAM Act in a lameduck session will only weaken Washington's credibility even further.

I also believe that these tactics show a lack of respect for those of us who want to see credible immigration reform. We all know that the majority—as well as the White House—have not kept their promises on immigration reform. They clearly hope a last-minute push for the DREAM Act during a lameluck session will outweigh 2 years of inaction and broken promises on this issue. These tactics clearly represent political gamesmanship: a cynical attempt to play on the hearts and minds of those who want real reform.

I continue to believe that our Nation would benefit from the DREAM Act being introduced and debated in committee; amended to address concerns with the bill; and incorporated into a credible immigration reform package that begins with border security and can win the support of the American people.

That is the kind of approach we need—the kind of approach I hope we can get once the new Congress takes up its responsibilities in January.

TAX CUTS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, last weekend I voted for legislation that would extend tax cuts for all Pennsylvanians. This legislation also included a continuation of expired unemployment insurance, a series of tax incentives that have created jobs in Pennsylvania like the R&D tax credit, the biodiesel tax credit which is essential to companies like Hero BX in Erie, the new markets tax credit and the payroll tax credit known as the HIRE Act. I also voted for permanent extensions of the enhanced child tax credit and earned income tax credit and the expanded adoption tax credit that I included in the health care reform law, all of which place money back into the pockets of working people across the Commonwealth.

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, out of 6.5 million filers in the Commonwealth in 2008, 98 percent had adjusted gross income below \$250,000. There is a consensus in Congress to extend tax cuts for these families. We should pass the middle income tax cuts, renew the job creation tax cuts and preserve unemployment insurance. We can then have a debate about the upper income tax breaks without using middle-income families and those laid off through no fault of their own as political bargaining chips. However, a long-term extension of tax cuts for upper income taxpayers, multimillionaires and billionaires, is not fiscally responsible for one reason: it adds hundreds of billions to the deficit without creating jobs or stimulating economic growth.

In recent months, I spoke to both business owners and economists to get their views on how Congress should handle the expiring tax provisions. What I learned is that certainty and consistency are needed when the economy is in such a fragile condition. We must reach a compromise. At most however, this might entail a short-term extension of upper income tax cuts and other ideas that could bring certainty without unduly increasing the deficit.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, November and December bring with them a contagious holiday spirit. During a time when many Vermonters are struggling to feed their families and heat their homes, community members across Vermont are stepping forward to provide a helping hand to their neighbors. I am proud that Vermont takes to heart our country's great tradition of offering a helping hand to those in need.

While many of us were at home with our families this Thanksgiving, the

staff and volunteers at the Vermont Boys & Girls Clubs of America were busy organizing food donations and cooking meals for the holiday to provide hot meals to those who might not otherwise have had a Thanksgiving dinner at all. In Rutland alone, the Boys & Girls Club cooked enough food to feed 100 people, with many of the ingredients donated by local farms. In Montpelier, the Washington County Youth Service Bureau and Boys & Girls Clubs staff and volunteers prepared turkey dinners to feed homeless Vermonters and financially secure residents alike, producing a real community dinner.

In these tough economic times, community resources are vital to the well-being of all Vermonters. As these resources become scarcer, donations and volunteers become indispensable. Rutland and Montpelier are just a few examples of where Vermonters are volunteering in their communities this holiday season. I am proud to call Vermont home and to count these volunteers among my friends and neighbors. I commend them and all those who donated food for Thanksgiving meals, and I applaud all those who voluntarily step forward throughout the year to take the time to attend to the support and safety of Vermont's children and families.

I ask unanimous consent that press articles detailing the work of the Vermont Boys & Girls Clubs and volunteers be printed in the RECORD. These articles include "Boys and Girls Club serves local Thanksgiving dinner" published by the Rutland Herald on November 24, 2010, and "Thanksgiving Volunteers deliver—with community spirit—in Montpelier," published by the Times Argus on November 26, 2010.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Rutland Herald, Nov. 24, 2010]

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB SERVES LOCAL
THANKSGIVING DINNER

(By Lucia Suarez)

The Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County hosted the annual Thanksgiving dinner as part of its food program, serving traditional Thanksgiving foods using local ingredients on Tuesday. Chef Ian Vair, food coordinator for the Boys and Girls Club, used mostly local ingredients donated through the Rutland Area Farm and Food Link as part of this year's Localvore Challenge.

Radical Roots Farm, Boardman Hill Farm in West Rutland, and Clark Farm in Wells donated all the food, he said.

Vair served roasted turkey, garlic mashed potatoes, stuffing, kale au gratin (in bechamel cream sauce), butternut squash casserole and Dutch apple pie to more than 50 hungry kids and their families. "We made enough for leftovers, enough food to feed about 100 people," Vair said. "It's two days of work."

Using the local ingredients for the dinner is part of the club's Localvore Challenge in collaboration with Sustainable Rutland. The challenge for Thanksgiving is to see how much of people's holiday dinner is from local ingredients, said Jim Sabatasa, coordinator for Sustainable Rutland. Local is defined as a 100-mile radius. "Thanksgiving is so much about the harvest," Sabatasa said.

Thirty families have signed up for the Localvore Challenge in Rutland, Sabatasa said. Using local foods is key for Vair, who tries to incorporate healthy carbohydrates and fresh vegetables to the meals he prepares at the club every day, he said. "I try to have fresh veggies in every meal," Vair said. "A lot of these kids are used to canned crap and they try fresh stuff and like it more."

Vair said the casserole is traditionally made with sweet potatoes but he used the butternut squash because it was available locally. Twelve-year-old Chyna Cast thought the food was great, her favorite being the garlic mashed potatoes, she said. "I think it's really good," Chyna said. "Actually, I think it's amazing."

The mashed potatoes seemed to be the biggest hit of the night. "I can have a mountain of potatoes on my plate for Thanksgiving," said Brooke Nuckles, director of the Center, an outreach program for 16-to-21-year-old members.

Through the food, Vair teaches the club's youths, especially those from the ages of 16 to 21, skills about cooking and the importance of healthy eating, he said. For the Thanksgiving dinner, kids from the 6-to-15-year-old group helped chef Vair make the pies and slice the bread for the stuffing. "It's great to see the kids, with their aprons on five nights a week in the kitchen," Nuckles said. "We are so thankful to the farmers of Vermont and lucky to have access to all the food."

[From the Times Argus, Nov. 26, 2010]

THANKSGIVING VOLUNTEERS DELIVER—WITH
COMMUNITY SPIRIT—IN MONTEPELIER

(By Peter Hirschfeld)

Montpelier—For 364 days a year, the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys and Girls Club operates programs that bring stability to the lives of local children and teenagers. But every Thanksgiving, the organization's 40-member staff transforms into a full-service catering crew.

Since 1972, the Youth Service Bureau has cooked up one of the best-attended free dinners in the state on a holiday devoted to food. On Thursday, in the festively decorated basement of the Bethany Church in Montpelier, diners enjoyed a meal made possible by hundreds of hours of volunteer labor.

"Look at this place—it's absolutely full," said Montpelier City Councilor Jim Sheridan. "Especially in these times, there's a need for something where the disabled, the disadvantaged, the needy, can come together, socialize and enjoy a good meal. It's just a wonderful thing."

Karena LaPan, a receptionist at the Youth Service Bureau, was the organizing force behind this year's meal. More than 200 people ate turkey and all the traditional fixings at Bethany Thursday afternoon. The Youth Service Bureau delivered another 290 prepared dinners to residents across the city. "It's unbelievable how many people are willing to donate time, money or food to making this possible," LaPan said "We all get a lot of enjoyment out of it."

Volunteers roasted about 35 turkeys this week to get ready for the event. On Wednesday, Youth Service Bureau staff spent the day in the Bethany kitchen over steaming kettles of potatoes, squash and other Thanksgiving standbys. Kreig Pinkham, executive director of the Youth Service Bureau, said the all-inclusive meal draws financially secure residents eager to break bread with neighbors, as well as more vulnerable people who wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise.

"It's a wonderful mix we get here," Pinkham said. "We get the homeless population coming in as well as families who don't want to make a full meal at home. It creates a really rich environment that's satisfying to be a part of."

Washington County Senator Bill Doyle had a full turkey leg with lots of gravy on his plate shortly after noon Thursday. It was his 12th consecutive Thanksgiving dinner at Bethany and he said that difficult economic times have made efforts like these even more important. "You can see the difficult times reflected in the number of people here today and the enthusiasm they have for a meal like this," Doyle said. "It says something about the community, this church and the Washington County Youth Service Bureau that this is available for whoever wants to come enjoy it."

Sheridan said events like the one Thursday are part of what make him proud to live in the Capital City.

NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT
ACT

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I rise today to commend members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Members of the Senate for their support of the National Alzheimer's Project Act, S. 3036. In particular, the committee was helpful in strengthening the National Alzheimer's Plan and the annual reporting requirements to Congress that include the articulation of goals, benchmarks, priorities, recommendations, and tracking outcomes.

This legislation is focused on changing the devastating trajectory of Alzheimer's disease for our families and our economy. Alzheimer's disease is a debilitating illness that affects more than 5 million Americans and their families every day. The growing number of Americans expected to be affected by this disease, which is estimated to reach up to 16 million people by 2050, will continue to place an enormous burden on families and loved ones, not to mention the serious fiscal consequences to consider if we do not act now to address this disease. If nothing is done, studies report that Alzheimer's disease will cost the United States \$20 trillion over the next 40 years.

With no current plan to address Alzheimer's, this important piece of legislation would lay the foundation to coordinate all Federal Alzheimer's programs and initiatives, including research, clinical care, institutional cared home- and community-based programs. The bill also ensures that a national Alzheimer's plan will be implemented by the agencies and Congress.

This bill will leverage existing leadership to offer real solutions to the Alzheimer's crisis. The National Alzheimer's plan called for in this bill will, for the first time, articulate what outcomes the Federal Government is seeking to reduce the impact of this crisis. It would allow Congress to assess whether the Nation is meeting the challenges of the disease for families, communities, and the economy. It