

Dominican-American community will bring great comfort and support to those who have lost loved ones.

Now we have to do whatever we can as the larger New York and American community to stand with and support these families. I spent some time last night at the Ramada Inn, that was set up at JFK Airport for the families to come seeking information and help. It was a grueling and wrenching experience. Many of the families there lost not just one member but several. I met one young man who lost his wife, his daughter, and his mother-in-law because they were going to the Dominican Republic to attend the funeral of a relative.

I met another young man who proudly held the picture of his brother who had just gotten back from his tour of duty on the U.S.S. *Enterprise* in support of our efforts in Afghanistan. He had just come back home and was going down to see friends and relatives. His family was so proud of this young man who had served our country.

There are many stories such as that which we will hear over the days and weeks ahead.

Of course, all that any of us can do is to promise our support and whatever assistance is needed; to offer our thoughts and our prayers; to stand with the government and the people of the Dominican Republic for whom this is a profound and unsettling tragic occurrence; to demonstrate clearly in all that we do that we will stand in the face of whatever comes; that New Yorkers are neither daunted nor beaten down by the continuation of tragedy and challenge; and that our determined spirit as Americans remains undiminished.

I look forward to working with the administration and my colleagues in ensuring that these New Yorkers, like those who were affected on September 11, know that our country stands behind them and with them.

Thank you, Madam President.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that for the next 30 minutes we be in a period of morning business with the majority controlling 15 minutes and the minority controlling 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I ask the assistant Democrat leader what the intention is at the conclusion of morning business.

Mr. REID. Madam President, at this stage, there is discussion between Senators DASCHLE and LOTT. They will decide within the next 30 minutes what is going out. I thought rather than bounce back and forth and asking permission to go to morning business that we should go off the bill for half an hour, go back to it, and maybe come back in the morning. The two leaders

have been visiting. They will decide what is going to happen later tonight.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you, Madam President.

CONDOLENCES TO NEW YORKERS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise for a moment to bring the best wishes and heartfelt condolences again to our colleagues from New York for this additional tragedy that has befallen them. All of my friends and family and the citizens of Michigan have their hearts going out to you. There has been such a difficult time for New York, as well as the entire country.

AIRLINE SECURITY AND THE STIMULUS PACKAGE

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I would like to share an experience this evening and commend a group of individuals who were involved in U.S. Airways Flight 969 last evening where I was a passenger going from Pittsburgh to National Airport. It was diverted into Dulles, as many of us have heard. There was a situation where someone stood up in explicit contradiction to the words from the pilot about what was to be done under national policy. Once you are within 30 minutes of Reagan National Airport, passengers are not under any circumstances to leave their seats. Unfortunately, this individual did and headed towards what appeared to be the cockpit.

I commend the air marshals who were on that flight. They responded with professionalism. They responded quickly with what appeared to be a threat to those of us who were on the flight.

I commend the pilot on U.S. Airways Flight 969 who responded with professionalism. He calmed what obviously was a potentially very confusing situation and what could have been great panic. This was the result of the pilot, the flight attendants, and the crew.

I would like to give my thanks and congratulations to everyone who was involved in this incident with the way they conducted themselves.

I was thinking as I sat in the 11th row and the B seat that this is an example of what could happen with na-

tional law enforcement officials professionally trained to do our airline security. It reaffirmed my commitment to the belief that we need to do what this Senate did 100 to 0, which is to pass a

law that says those who look at the baggage and those who do the security checks of our carry-ons are professionally trained Federal law enforcement officials. I call on my colleagues to bring that bill back from the conference committee with that provision in it.

I don't believe there was a person on that plane last night who was not

grateful for the fact that we had Federal law enforcement officials trained to protect the people on that plane; they responded professionally as Federal law enforcement officials.

Every day we are grateful to receive that kind of protection from our Capitol Police as well, and I think our families deserve to have that.

I encourage my colleagues to reflect on what is best for all Americans, and not what is best for the interests of one party or the other.

I can say with great confidence—and it was reaffirmed last night for me—that having Federal law enforcement officials who are trained both on the ground checking the baggage as well as on our airplanes is in the interests of all of our families.

I find it interesting now as we are grappling as a body of the Senate and the House and coming together as Americans to support the President; this is our team on the field. We are the team of Americans. The coach is the President, and we are all there together. We are supporting the President. We want him to be successful. We all need to be successful in fighting these terrorist attacks and making sure that our people are safe.

I think it is also important and it is our responsibility to be able to disagree about a particular play or a particular strategy when the team is on the field.

In this particular case, I urge the President to join us in embracing the principle that we should have Federal law enforcement security at every level of airport and airline security.

I also ask our colleagues to focus now as we stimulate this economy and put money back into people's pockets as well as homeland security. The time is now to act. We know that workers need assistance. We know the economy needs stimulus. The best way to do both of those is to provide relief to workers who need it the most. Economists across the country agree that providing relief to low- and moderate-income families is one of the most successful ways to stimulate the economy. Why? They will immediately take those dollars and go to the grocery store. They will buy shoes for their children who go to school. In Michigan they will go buy a winter coat. They may buy a new car, which we would also be very happy about in the State of Michigan.

People will turn those dollars around because they need to be able to live and to be able to care for their families. Studies have shown that every \$1 invested in unemployment insurance for those who have lost their jobs because of September 11 or other downturns in the economy generates \$2.15 in gross domestic product. Directly, we know that \$1 generates \$2.15.

So I hope this week we will embrace what the Democrats have proposed to stimulate this economy, to put money back in people's pockets, who will then use it to care for their families, to

spend in the economy, and that we will invest in those critical homeland security measures that are absolutely necessary for us to move forward as a country.

This is an opportunity to get it right. This is an opportunity for us to take action, action to keep us safe in airports and on airlines, action to keep us safe whether it relates to bioterrorism or food safety or other critical measures that have been proposed for action by the Democratic caucus, and action as it relates to focusing on those who are unemployed and those who are low- and moderate-income families who need to have money in their pocket to help stimulate this economy.

The time to act is now. I call on my colleagues, this week, to put that at the top of the agenda for both of those items.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BILL

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I would like to speak a little about the stimulus economic recovery bill that is now pending, particularly from the point of view of what the provisions are that affect small business.

In the aftermath of September 11, it became clear that our economy generally was going to suffer. I remember reading an article. It was kind of stunning in a certain aspect; that is, if the terrorists were aiming the planes at the “masters of the universe”—New York bond traders, and so forth—it did wreak tremendous devastation and tragedy for so many people who do trade in securities, but to an even greater degree it has affected the economic livelihood of small businesses, shop owners, different communities in the city of New York. It is middle-income and lower-income people, who live in New York and across the country, who are hurt the most, who are hurt more than higher income people.

The loss of life is beyond description. But, in addition, the economic devastation has hit small business more than it has hit big business. And small businesspeople have a much harder time adjusting than do big businesses. So for that reason, because we have limited resources, we want to make sure we have a balanced solution that very much helps small business.

When the President spoke about an economic stimulus, he made three basic points. One, he wanted us to stimulate the economy. He suggested that it be short-term. He also suggested that any stimulus not have ad-

verse long-term consequences on future budgets. These are principles with which we all agree.

Let me speak now about small business. We say this many times, and I think it is very important to say it again. Small business really is the backbone of America. More new jobs are created by small business than by big business. That is a fact. We tend to forget that. We read reports that such-and-such company is laying off so many people and another company is laying off another thousand people, or several thousand people. We hear that, and those are big companies that have lots of employees, and unfortunately they are laying off relatively large numbers. We don't hear a word about the mom-and-pop businesses in our communities that had to lay off a few people. It is happening all over the country. The numbers are so great. They are also the same businesses that create more jobs. They create more jobs than does big business.

Small business is also the genesis and the fountain of more business ideas. More business ideas are developed by small business than by big business. There is probably a reason for that. A small business has to fight to survive; the margins are so low. If you are opening up a small business, you have to pay that payroll tax the first day, even though you don't have any income. It is very tough. Lots of people have new ideas and they want to start a business. That is the American way.

It is critically important that we not lose sight of small business. In fact, I think we should help small business because in many ways it is the bedrock of our country. Here is what we have done. Let's look at some of the provisions of the bill. One is to increase the amount a business can expense. It is called section 179 of the Tax Code. That section allows businesses to expense rather than depreciate assets, right now, this year, instead of writing it off over a period of time. We increase the limit. By increasing that limit, small business can write off more and invest more than they otherwise could.

Section 179 of the code provides an exception to the normal depreciation rule. That is the limit that a small business can expense. It allows up to \$24,000 in business purchases to be deducted in the year of purchase. The amount is reduced once a business makes \$200,000 worth of purchases in a given year. That is not a lot of money, but that is the limit. We want to allow businesses to deduct more so they purchase more products upfront.

Increasing the amount that can be expensed is the simplest way to stimulate small business to try to expand. It helps small business keep up with rapid growth and change in the technology sector by reducing the capital costs of the company.

The bill reported by the Finance Committee includes a provision that increases the amount a business can expense from \$24,000 to \$35,000 over a 12-

month period. This also raises the maximum amount of qualified purchases from \$200,000 to \$325,000. This provision provides an immediate and focused stimulus. It is only available to companies purchasing equipment, and only if they make the purchases within a 12-month period. I might say that this is a bipartisan provision.

There are a lot of bipartisan provisions in this bill. We hear sometimes about the partisan provisions, but much more in this bill is more bipartisan than not. One is the rebate checks. Both sides agree to that. Both sides agree to the small business 179 expensing limit being raised. Both sides agree to bonus depreciation; it is just a question of how much. Both sides agree to extending unemployment compensation benefits; it is just a question of how much. Both sides agree that we should probably help the people who have lost their health insurance because they have lost their jobs.

Over the last year, more than half of the people who have lost their jobs as a consequence have also lost their health insurance. That is because most people who are laid off had health benefits as part of the job, but they don't anymore.

So this expensing is one of the other bipartisan provisions.

A couple of statistics about small business. In 1996, there were about 5 million corporations, partnerships, and sole proprietorships that had potential 179 investments. Of those 5 million, about 96 percent had gross receipts of \$5 million or below. We are talking small business, not big business. Expanding the amount of investments these companies can make and expense immediately would give these small businesses real incentive to invest and give the economy a needed lift. In Lower Manhattan alone, there are between 14,000 and 16,000 businesses directly affected by the collapse of the Trade Towers. That is according to the Empire State Development Corporation. I daresay there are many more indirectly affected. It is estimated that as many as 105,000 businesses may ultimately be impacted directly or indirectly in New York as a consequence of the disaster of September 11. Those businesses need to bounce back, and this provision, along with other specific provisions in the bill, will go a long way to provide that assistance.

I might say that the 179 provision, where businesses can expense more, is not only targeted to New York, but to the whole country, because this economic downturn we are experiencing really began about a year or so ago, and it was accelerated by September 11; but the whole country has experienced an economic downturn. That is why this provision will help New York and also the rest of the country.

Madam President, I also believe that tomorrow morning, in the spirit of bipartisanship, we are finally going to sit down and work out an agreement on the stimulus/economic recovery bill. I