

South Carolina about you all. We understand about the Grizzlies in Delaware. They have been a very powerful Division I-AA team actually the last—almost the last decade, the last 8 years or so. I just want you to know that, even though the Presiding Officer is from a State that has a team called the Spartans—and they only get 100,000 folks or so to show up to their games; they don't understand, as the Presiding Officer prior to this, from the University of Michigan and Michigan State, where they get 110,000 people—they don't understand real football that the three of us understand.

At some point we should have a more far-reaching discussion about football as it is really still played, where there are student athletes who take seriously that undertaking, as they do their football.

I want to say that people who do not follow and understand that—and many do not because of the media—who do not follow Division II football, should understand there are some very serious ballplayers. It is very good football, high-caliber football. And, in any given year, such as this year, a team such as the Grizzlies is able to compete with Division I teams. They couldn't do it day in and day out. They could not do it 10 games a year. But it is very serious football.

I have been through these bets myself over the last 29 years here because my alma mater has been engaged in this national championship more than once. Delaware this year had a lousy season, relatively speaking—a winning season but a lousy season. But we have a coach who this year made it to the ranks of only 6 coaches in the history of college football to win over 300 football games.

I just want to rise and salute Division II football, where it is not a 40-hour-a-week job to attend school, but it is serious, serious football. I would argue the pressure on some of the fine athletes at Northern Iowa and the University of Montana, the University of Delaware, to play this caliber football and what is also expected of them off the field, is a real strain, a real burden on some of them because they do not get the same opportunities, same scholarships, same treatment, on occasion, that some of the major Division I school athletes do.

I salute the Grizzlies. They are one tough team. When I told my friend from South Carolina about your record, because I was very familiar with it, he blanched and said, as only he could say because he is one of the most humorous guys here: My Lord, if that's the case and they lose, and I have to recite that, they should change that fight song.

Having said that, I yield the floor and wait my turn to speak on a more serious subject.

Mr. BAUCUS. If I may ask the indulgence of my good friend, one of the teams in the home State of the Presiding Officer, of course, is the Badgers.

For the previous occupant of the chair, it was the Wolverines, and the Grizzlies of Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELLSTONE). The Chair would observe the team in Minnesota is the Gophers. The Badgers are Wisconsin.

Mr. BAUCUS. So we have the Gophers, Wolverines, Panthers, Grizzlies, and Maine has the Black Bears. I am going to ask my good friend from Delaware, whom do we have in Delaware?

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, Delaware has proudly named after the strongest group of revolutionary fighters in the Revolution from the State of Delaware. Back in those days, cock fights were very much in vogue. The toughest of those competitors were the Blue Hens of Delaware. I want the record to show the Blue Hens have taken Panthers, Badgers, and Bears in their stride, including the Black Bears of Maine. We are little, but we are very strong.

I often wish the mascot in the Revolutionary War for the Delaware regiment had been a panther or a lion, but it happened to be a blue hen. So we are the Delaware Blue Hens, and proud to be such.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I will bet they are the strongest, toughest Blue Hens that have ever existed on this Earth.

Mr. BIDEN. That is a fact.

Mr. BAUCUS. I look forward to next year when the Senator from Delaware stands in the Chamber and gives a recitation of the Grizzlies' fight song. I hope we can come to that day.

I thank all Senators for indulging me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Iowa with the good-looking holiday sweater.

THE ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the session is about to end. I would like to call to the attention of colleagues one proposition that I hope comes before the Senate before we adjourn. That is the so-called economic stimulus package. You might call it an economic security package.

Nothing I say is going to in any way detract from the working relationship that I have with Senator BAUCUS as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

Maybe in this instance we did not reach an agreement involving he and I having complete agreement on a final product. There were other factors that came into play that maybe kept those negotiations from being one-on-one negotiations where people could freely negotiate and reach an agreement as you should in a conference. But all of this discussion, plus other forums I have been in with Senator BAUCUS as chairman of that committee, have been very cordial and productive sessions, even when they have not come out with a product.

I only wish that when the stimulus package comes to the floor I have the

privilege of doing as we did last spring defending that package, along with Senator BAUCUS, with the two of us working together to get it through the Senate. Hopefully that can still happen. It may not happen, but it doesn't mean that Senator BAUCUS has not worked hard to help that happen. Hopefully, we can continue next year to do some things in other areas that fall within the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee that will bring bipartisan bills to the Senate floor for successful passage by the Senate.

Probably what we are ending up with here, instead of what might come out of the conference committee which I was referring to in my work with Senator BAUCUS, is kind of a hybrid that involves some individual negotiations and some people who aren't even on the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over most of the product. But this is a bill that is going to be introduced in the House. It is my understanding that it is a bill in which I will have some input, and the White House, and a group in the Senate called the centrists, a bipartisan group of Democrats and Republicans who might call themselves kind of middle-of-the-road types. It is an economic stimulus package presumably passing the House and coming to the Senate. I hope people will see it as a very rich proposal that will help displaced workers and give a boost to the economy.

Since September 11, we have focused on dislocated workers and unemployed people who have been hurt. But there are also a lot of people who are working and who are in anguish over what the future holds for them. Even if they have very good jobs, that might be the case because things aren't the same since September 11.

When we talk about an economic security package, even though we might tend to concentrate on the dislocated workers, we are concerned about all workers because people have some questions about the future. Because of what happened on September 11, they see the future a little differently with a little less security than they did prior to that time.

An economic security package addresses the needs of people who are working as well as people who are dislocated. It does what we can to help those who are dislocated through troubled times. But it also is meant to give some confidence to those who are working and to beef up the economy so we will be able to find jobs for people who are dislocated.

We are in a state of war. We don't know how long that state of war will be there. But it is not going to end when we find the last Taliban in Afghanistan, or the last al-Qaida member. It isn't going to end when we find bin Laden and other leaders responsible for what happened on September 11. How long the war is going to go on I do not know. But it is not over.

We are talking about America being in a state of war since September 11.

The Congress of the United States has addressed that and has given the President the backing that our Constitution demands from a partner in a war act, as Congress is a partner in that.

We need to remember that we are in a state of war and that things aren't the same. The Senate ought to respond as if we were in a state of war.

I think one of the ways to responsibly respond is for the Senate to vote on the economic security or economic stimulus package. I hope the Senate majority leader will let his caucus vote the conscience of the individual Member. I hope there isn't any attempt to put the position of the party ahead of the good of the country in the closing hours of this session so we can pass this bill.

It is time to finish our work, but it is also time to do the people's business. There is nothing more important right now than responding to the needs of the people of our country in a time of war when there is a great deal of anxiety and anguish about the future, not only among the dislocated but among those who are even working.

We are in the position of finishing the last of the appropriations bills. It is time to help the dislocated workers and those who are working and create jobs for the employed to give a shot in the arm to the economy.

I believe the White House centrist agreement is bipartisan and bicameral and is a product that ought to be brought before the Senate after it passes the House.

Remember that this isn't something coming to the Senate just on the spur of the moment in the sense that there is a rude awakening and we ought to do something about the economic situation and pass some stimulus. The President recommended it in early October when he proposed a program of accelerated depreciation, tax reduction, tax rebates for low-income people, enhancement of unemployment compensation, and help for the health care needs of the unemployed. The President did that. It wasn't the President who started it. There were lots of meetings held by Senator BAUCUS with Democrats and Republicans, and maybe meetings with only Democrats. We held separate Republican meetings in early October on whether or not we ought to have a stimulus package. We sought the advice of Chairman Greenspan.

There was some question in late September or early October when these meetings were being held about whether or not we needed an economic stimulus. But it was just a matter of a couple weeks until the President, probably on his own, made a determination and a proposal to Congress.

Parallel with that, there was a growing conclusion within both Houses of Congress and both parties that an economic stimulus package was needed. So we have been working in this direction for a long period of time.

There is a product before us now that is bicameral and bipartisan. Partisan-

ship has been evident in this body, by the Senate Finance Committee voting out a bill on party-line votes, bringing it to the Senate, and finally coming to the determination that that partisan bill could not pass. It is not because everything in it was wrong but just because partisan legislation does not get through this body. You have to have some bipartisanship in order for a product to successfully clear this body.

So we have now a further compromise. It is not the President's proposal. We have gone way beyond what the President wanted to do in some of these areas. It does not have some of the baggage of a bill that previously passed the House of Representatives had, such as, for instance, the retroactive alternative minimum tax, where there is a lot of money just coming out of the Federal Treasury back to corporate America. It has many of the things the Democrats wanted and many of the things the Republicans wanted. But it is going down the same road now because it is bipartisan, bicameral, and it is coming to the Senate.

As to things such as accelerated depreciation, there are some changes in the alternative minimum tax that reflect the realities that accelerated depreciation will not work if there are not some changes in the alternative minimum tax. It speeds up tax brackets for middle-income taxpayers by reducing the 27 percent bracket down to 25 percent, and doing it January 1, 2002, instead of January 1, 2004, and January 1, 2006.

We recognize the needs of stimulating the consumer demand by tax rebates to low-income Americans. We increase unemployment compensation by 13 weeks. We have, for the first time in 70 years, a very dramatic change in the social policy of this country for unemployed people by providing health insurance for unemployed people. That is welcomed by a lot of Republicans. And it ought to be welcomed by a lot of Democrats. So I want to describe that.

I would also like to take an opportunity to clear up the record on press conferences that are being held by my friends in the Democrat leadership. Too often it is said, in a disinformation way, that what is really holding this up is that Republicans do not want health benefits for dislocated workers.

I think I have just now said, in this new policy—the first in 70 years; the biggest social change in the policy for dislocated workers in 70 years—that we support this. It is part of this package. So why would anyone say that Republicans do not care anything about health benefits for dislocated workers?

The President proposed it early on—not in a way I thought was very workable, but he proposed spending money on it. We have a package that has \$23 billion of such benefit in it. In fact, it is a package with \$2 billion less which helps more people than what some of the Democratic proposals would do.

So if you can help more people for less of the taxpayers' money, isn't that

good? And isn't it good, too, that there is agreement that it needs to be done? I do not think it is fair for people in the Democratic leadership to say Republicans are against helping with the health benefits for unemployed workers when it has been in every one of our plans and even the President was the first to propose it.

I think the bipartisan, bicameral provisions that are coming before the House and Senate within the next 48 hours represent a genuine compromise. Not only does it provide an unemployment insurance extension of 13 weeks, but it also has Reed Act transfers—more money—to the States for them to spend for enhancing their own—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is the Chair's understanding that the time allocated in morning business to the Senator from Iowa has expired.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I am not sure I was aware of it or I would have asked permission to go beyond that because I know all the previous speakers spoke longer than 5 minutes and the gavel was never rapped. So if that is the case—

Mr. BIDEN. I have no objection to the Senator continuing his speech. I am wondering how long he is likely to speak.

Will the Senator say roughly how long he is going to speak?

Mr. GRASSLEY. I think now that I have spoken this long, I would say about 10 minutes.

Mr. BIDEN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. GRASSLEY. We give more money to the States if they want to improve even more their unemployment benefits. We are giving a 60-percent tax credit for health care tax for unemployed workers, including people who can use it to extend COBRA insurance benefits.

States will have the ability to address problems such as part-time workers. There is a modest proposal to accelerate income tax rate reductions in the 27-percent bracket.

I am sure there are a lot of Members of this body, particularly those who voted against the bipartisan tax bill last spring, who are not going to want to speed up, from 27 percent to 25 percent, the reduction of that tax rate. Somehow there is an insinuation that if you do that, you are helping the wealthy. I want my colleagues to remember that this benefits a single taxpayer earning as little as \$27,051 and going up to \$65,000. And then, for a married couple, that would kick in at \$45,201, going up to \$109,000.

For people making \$27,000, where this bracket starts, or for married couples making \$45,000, these are not rich people or rich families. What we are talking about is a 2-percent-point tax cut for these folks.

So is there anything wrong with a single person paying \$770 less in taxes or a married couple paying \$1,281 less in taxes if they fall into this income tax bracket that we would call middle income?

It seems to me it is fair, but, most importantly, it is meant to be a stimulus. This is something that middle-of-the-road Democrats and Republicans support. This is part of the original centrist package.

We also have a 30-percent bonus depreciation. That is something that was in everybody's package, Republican or Democrat, House or Senate.

We have also a 5-year net operating loss carryback. That was not in the President's package. That was not in the Senate Republican package. That was in the Senate Democratic package.

On corporate alternative minimum tax, there is no repeal, no retroactivity, like was lambasted when it came out of the House that way. There is no corporate AMT repeal, retroactive or otherwise, in the White House-centrist package. There are some well thought out reforms that cost about one-twentieth of what the House bill did on alternative minimum tax. That is a very major movement. That is why the centrists support this compromise.

The White House-centrist package extends expiring tax provisions by 2 years.

Finally, the White House-centrist package includes bipartisan tax relief proposals for victims of terrorism and business in New York City. These are much needed, and they are urgent matters. I believe the Senators from New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut ought to find it inviting that these things are in there for their constituents and support this package.

Let's get the record straight. Let's have a good debate. Let the votes fall where they may. I can't help but ask our distinguished majority leader, Senator DASCHLE, to give the people what they want—a bipartisan economic stimulus bill with the largest aid going to dislocated workers in a generation.

It is clear that the people and the President don't want stalling, don't want muddling, don't want delay and, most important in this state of war we are in, don't want partisanship.

I urge the Senate majority leader to do the right thing: End this session by delivering a bipartisan priority. By doing it, we put the people's business first. If I were the majority leader, I would not know how to explain to the American people, as I returned home to the State of Iowa to enjoy the holiday season there with my family on the farm at New Hartford, why millions of Americans are desperately waiting for the Senate to pass an economic and job security bill that has been in this body for the last 2 months. If I were the majority leader, I don't know how I would explain to the people of Iowa, how I could look my constituents straight in the eye, and all of my taxpayers and all the small business owners of Iowa, and explain, by not passing this bill, how I would choose politics ahead of people.

It is time to get the job done. There is still time to do it. If people are allowed to vote their conscience and not

have the restriction of party, we can get the job done, I believe.

I yield the floor.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator DASCHLE, I announce there are no more votes tonight.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 3061

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 20, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3061; that there be 90 minutes for debate equally divided between Senators HARKIN and SPECTER or their designees; that an additional 20 minutes be given to Senators MCCAIN and BROWNBACK—that is 10 minutes for each of them, for a total of 20 minutes—that there be 10 minutes each for Senator DOMENICI and Senator WELLSTONE; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on adoption of the conference report.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—CONFERENCE REPORT TO ACCOMPANY H.R. 2506

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, may turn to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2506 and that there be 1 hour 5 minutes for debate divided as follows: Senator LEAHY, 10 minutes; Senator BYRD, 45 minutes; Senator MCCONNELL, 10 minutes; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements related thereto be printed in the RECORD at the appropriate place, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, before I speak on what I came over to the floor to discuss today, I would like to respond in 60 seconds to the Senator from Iowa.

I don't think the stimulus bill is about partisanship. The stimulus bill is about whether we are going to take care of workers and displaced people

because of the economy or whether we are going to reward corporate entities that are not going to reinvest instantly in the economy and stimulate the economy. How can we stimulate the economy if what we are going to be "spending" through either tax expenditures or direct expenditures doesn't spend out for 2 years or more?

This is about fairness. The stimulus package I have seen so far is not remotely bipartisan and is in fact a serious mistake, based on what I know, unless there is some iteration in the last 12 hours of which I am unaware.

MAINTAIN OUR BALKAN COMMITMENT

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to take issue with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's comments yesterday in Brussels, in which he called for reducing NATO forces in Bosnia by one-third by the end of next year.

I find Secretary Rumsfeld's proposal both faulty in its logic, and dangerous in its implications.

Mr. Rumsfeld based his suggestion upon the allegation that the size of the NATO mission in Bosnia, known as SFOR, is "putting an increasing strain on both our forces and our resources when they face growing demands from critical missions in the war on terrorism."

From this assertion, one might think that the United States and NATO have massive numbers of troops in Bosnia. In fact, SFOR's strength is now about 18,400 troops. The U.S. contingent is only 3,100.

According to the Pentagon's new Quadrennial Defense Review, we must be able to "swiftly defeat aggression in overlapping major conflicts while preserving the option of decisive victory, including regime change or occupation and conduct a limited number of smaller-scale contingency operations."

By any calculation, therefore, we should have plenty of troops and materiel to handle the smaller-scale operation in Bosnia and still meet our commitments elsewhere in the war on terrorism.

In short, Secretary Rumsfeld's argument that Bosnia is a serious drain on our war-fighting capabilities simply doesn't wash.

I should also point out that we have already greatly reduced the size of the NATO-led operation in Bosnia. The current level of 18,400 troops is down from an original 60,000. The 3,100 Americans are down from an original 20,000.

Moreover, why should we quit a game in the fourth quarter when we're winning? Bosnia and Herzegovina still has many problems, but even the harshest critic of our policy there must admit that significant progress has been made since the Dayton Accords were signed six years ago. For example, there non-nationalist, multi-ethnic coalitions now govern both the Federation and the national parliaments. All of the political, economic, and social