

likely will not be in session on Friday out of consideration for the Democratic gathering and planned meeting. That will be similar to the following Friday as well. We will have further announcements on that schedule during the course of the week.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I may say before the leader leaves the floor, I believe we had a productive week last week. It was extremely difficult and contentious at times. When it ended, I think it was good. I hope the leader will use whatever influence he has, which is significant, to have the conference move forward. We need to get this bill done. I hope the leader will do whatever he can to have the House and the Senate begin meeting immediately, and, of course, the way it works is the administration is heavily involved in those conferences. This is so important. I hope we start that "yesterday."

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I, too, will encourage our colleagues in the Senate and in the House of Representatives and the administration with regard to having an expeditious process. We all did work very hard. We had a recess that had been initially planned, and with the goal of being able to accomplish what we all set out to accomplish—and that is completion of these appropriations bills—all of us came back from that recess, worked together hand in hand, and accomplished a lot. So over the course of today, we will be talking to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and bicamerally, so we can expeditiously bring this legislation to a conclusion.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with the time to be divided as previously ordered, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. LOTT pertaining to the introduction of S. 219 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE STATE OF THE UNION

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, tonight our President comes to Capitol Hill, as Presidents historically do, to deliver a State of the Union Message both to us here in Congress and to the country at large. I would have to say that this State of the Union probably, in his Presidency, is one of the most critical.

We have a very bold President who has not ducked from any of his responsibilities, and in so he has been a very dynamic, forceful leader for our country. Tonight I believe he comes to Capitol Hill to challenge us here in the Congress on a variety of fronts, to challenge us to do our work in a bipartisan way, not only for our country and for the citizens of our country but for the world at large. This is a President who tonight will speak on a variety of topics. Let me talk about four areas I think he will dwell on for much of his time.

First of all is growing our economy and creating jobs. There is no question that we are in, and have come through, a recession. We have men and women in our country who are out of work. The economy has slowed. The revenues to government have frustrated our States. Certainly we have to recognize and deal with that here, as revenues have declined. But most important, clearly it is an issue of men and women out of work. He will challenge us to grow our economy and to create new jobs, and he will do so by the dynamic approach of the stimulus package that will have tax reduction in it, to get money back into the economy and out to not only the job creator but middle-income Americans themselves, those who are the hard-working men and women of our country.

It will be argued from the other side, with oftentimes the gnashing of teeth and the wringing of hands, that somehow the President is going to take money away from Government. Somehow, it is Government, if you leave the money in Government, that will create all of these jobs and will provide the safety net and the security for the American people. Yet just last week we saw our colleagues on the other side offer amendment after amendment that would have driven up our deficit by nearly \$450 billion to \$500 billion over the next several years. They clearly demonstrated that their intent is to keep all the money they can get and spend it, instead of in any way trying to create a package that will not take money out of the pockets of the working men and women of our country but will also generate the incentives that will cause the economy of this country to reinvest and to create jobs.

Over the next several months—and I hope it will only be a couple of months—the Finance Committee here in the Senate, and hopefully the House Ways and Means Committee, will come forth with a budget and a budget proposal that will include within it, I trust, many of the incentives that our President is proposing in his economic stimulus package that he will talk about tonight. We can be a positive force in the economy by rewarding and recognizing both investment and hard work, instead of penalizing them by taking more and more, or by creating the kinds of hurdles or obstacles that the investment community has to take to reinvest in the economy. So I hope

we listen closely to that proposal tonight, as our President visits with us about it.

He has obviously talked about—and I think will talk again tonight—strengthening and improving health care in this country. We worked at it a long while last year. We were at the threshold of dealing with Medicare reform and prescription drugs. Those probably are some of the most difficult areas with which to deal, but the most important. Prescription drugs have become a dynamic part of health care delivery in this country, yet we still deal with an old Medicare model that is not paying its way to the provider and the caregiver. As a result, many of our senior citizens are having difficulty finding a primary care provider, and are paying \$300, \$400, \$500, \$600 a month oftentimes, and more, for prescription drugs. We can deal with that this year and we can deal with it in a bipartisan way. The President has supported us in that.

But last year, struggle as we might, somehow some of my colleagues thought it was an issue better left unaddressed until after the election. Why? I suspect they thought they could take it to the people and somehow gain political favor by arguing that one side or the other had denied the senior citizens of this country access to a viable modern Medicare program with prescription drugs. I believe that argument fell hollow. What was heard by all of us who were out running for reelection last year was: Congress, do your work. Do it on a timely basis. Do it on a responsible basis. Yes, and do it in a bipartisan way. But don't drag your feet, don't argue, and, most important, don't in every way avoid getting your work done, failing to address the problem with the argument that somehow you will gain political favor by doing so; that will not work.

I think the President may also talk about something else that is reshaping American health care, and that is, of course, excessive lawsuits that are causing doctors literally to pack their bags and move to other States that have been bold enough to do tort reform over the last several years and where, as a result, the cost of insurance for care providers is not as great as it is in other areas of our country. This is something we have to deal with here. Yes, we have to look at a certain segment of our economy right in the eye and say fair is fair. A reward for malpractice suit should not make both the patient and his attorney multimillionaires in a single act. Clearly, a person injured by malpractice should be rewarded for that injury. None of us argue that. But the fact that in some instances predator lawyers can make a million dollars or more a case doesn't make a lot of sense to me, and I don't think it makes a lot of sense to the consumers, who now find they have to pick up the bill because of malpractice insurance that some doctors are now paying that is in the \$200,000 to \$300,000

to \$400,000 a year range. That is, by any definition, excessive. I think our President will speak to that this evening, will talk about tort reform, and charge us, this Congress, in a bipartisan way to deal with that responsibly.

It is obvious to me, at least, that many Americans will be tuning in tonight to listen to the President on those issues. But obviously there is now another issue on which he will spend, I would guess, a good deal of time. That is the issue of defending peace and security at home and abroad. The President came to us last year in a post-9/11 environment with a very bold reform package. In the waning days of the last Congress, we produced a new agency of our Government entitled the Department of Homeland Security. That was a bold step on the part of our President. Anyone on the other side who says that we are less secure today as a country than we were before 9/11, or that we are not as secure as we ought to be, fails to recognize the significant amount of money and the major steps that have been and are now being taken to build greater security for the citizens of our country.

I was chuckling a little bit the other day when a Member of this Senate talked about not having accomplished anything. I thought, my goodness, that Senator must never travel on the airlines anymore, must never go through security checks that sometimes take 20, 30, and 40 minutes, that sometimes require all of your bags to be inspected, your shoes taken off, your coat and jacket to be taken off.

I have seen, and I am sure the Presiding Officer has seen, 4- and 5-year-old kids almost strip-searched and wanded at the airports. Arguably, that is security. Frustrating? Yes. But I think our airlines today are substantially more secure than they have been. They will become increasingly secure as we refine security, and the people at those checkpoints become all the more efficient in their jobs. That is part of what this Congress has accomplished.

Certainly border security has become increasingly tight. The ability to identify illegal aliens who may be here for a purpose of doing us harm is now an aggressive process, well underway. Our Department of Justice has moved very aggressively to find, apprehend, and prosecute those where cases can be effectively built that they are, in one form or another, here with a purpose other than finding work and providing beneficial service to this economy.

For anyone to say we are less secure today is a surprise to me. Does it say we are as secure as we ought to be? Certainly not. But it also suggests, in light of the threat of terrorism, that we, as a country, live differently today and must think differently in a post-9/11 environment, that we must be constantly vigilant and, yes, our agencies of government—whether it be Federal, State, or local—must improve their abilities. And they are being given the

resources to do just that, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Certainly, that is a challenge. I think it is a challenge that the President will speak about this evening.

Lastly, and certainly as important, will be the issue of security abroad. Our Nation is a humane and civil nation. We are a peace-loving nation. We have always taken war as a very serious undertaking and one from which—while we do not enjoy it in any way when it comes to our own citizens' security and the security of freedom-loving citizens and allies around the world—we have not stepped back. Certainly, in a post-cold-war environment, we recognize, as the world's superpower, that awesome responsibility and force we have.

This President—and I have heard him, as have all of us—speaks very clearly to that, recognizing not only his responsibilities as our President and Commander in Chief, but it is a responsibility he does not take lightly nor does he take casually. He sees it as a huge responsibility and one that he and his Cabinet treat most seriously.

In doing so, he has operated both in a bold and cautious fashion. For anyone to suggest anything less than that did not hear our President's speech at the United Nations and his willingness to challenge them to do their job with the passage of the U.N. resolution that, in fact, finally put inspectors back into Iraq to do just that, to inspect and to find if Saddam Hussein had lived up to the original U.N. resolution, first and foremost, and, secondly, to see if, in fact, he was continuing to build weapons of mass destruction and if he had gained any kind of nuclear capability.

It has already been well established that he has both chemical and biological weapons. Those were found. Those were recorded. Yet somehow today the world is cautiously saying: Well, that doesn't seem to count anymore. It is what you find today or tomorrow that will cause this country and our allies to disarm Saddam Hussein.

I do not think the President or his people see it that way. And while they have been willing to give the United Nations ample time to respond, this President does have a responsibility, and that responsibility is, yes, to the world at large and the freedom-loving people around the world, but his responsibility is to us, here at home, to make sure the actions we take in foreign policy increasingly reflect on our security and our stability.

I think the President will talk about that this evening, as certainly he and his Cabinet have been involved in that over the last good number of weeks and months. It has been one of his primary missions, along with bringing this economy back to life and moving us forward as a country.

This is a critical speech for our country, both here and abroad, as this President speaks to us and to the American people about his vision of leadership and responsibility, to move

our economy, to create jobs, to put people back to work and, at the same time, to strengthen and improve health care and the general well-being of the citizens.

He will, by his proposal of faith-based approaches, encourage us to deal with acts of compassion. The President wants to apply compassion to some of the deepest problems in America. That is a side of our President that has been badly underestimated by some. He will urge Congress to pass both his faith-based and citizen service initiatives. Why? Because it is in the best interest of this country to do so. For good people to be helping good people who are in need of help, with some assistance from our Government, at a tremendously lower cost and in a considerably more compassionate way, is exactly what this President will speak to in that initiative.

Lastly, of course, as I have mentioned, is defending the peace and the security at home and abroad. September 11, nearly 2 years ago now, was a time of awakening under an attack and a loss of our fellow citizens' lives that we didn't think could happen. While some experts had studied the issue over the years and had told us that someday it would happen, I don't believe there was ever a true belief that it could happen here. Now we know it can.

For us to think it will never happen again would be to dramatically underestimate not only the ability of the human mind to figure a new approach but the intent of terrorists to do our citizens and our country wrong.

We have made some great steps forward in reshaping Government and its agencies to be more sensitive, to be able to connect the dots of intelligence and information and, out of that, to make an assessment as to the security of our country.

Also, this President has gone much beyond that. He has reached out to the world at large and challenged people not to in any way encourage or ignore a risk of terrorism and to deal with terrorists as if they were enemies of the world and enemies of the state. Clearly, we have a role, as a very powerful country, in working with our allies to make sure terrorism and terrorists have no safe haven anywhere in the world. That is why our President insisted that U.N. resolutions be enforced and that we go back into Iraq, as the United Nations inspections team has over the last several months, to determine whether Saddam Hussein was living up to U.N. resolutions that largely were to disarm and neutralize him after the Desert Storm war over a decade ago.

That will be another important part of his speech this evening, as he assesses that for us and challenges us, both as a country and as a Congress, to work with him in the days to come.

Trade and jobs and the economy on one hand, security on another, these are issues that Congresses in the past

have faced and this Congress will face. Our challenge is to be able to work together, not for one side to gain political advantage over the other but to see how we can best solve these problems. Many of them, if not most, will have to be dealt with in a bipartisan way so that our country truly does come together not only to make ourselves more secure, but in that security to be able to live in a good life, to be able to have the resources and the wherewithal to sustain life in both a livable and enjoyable fashion. That is the American dream. Most important, that is the American responsibility, be it here at home or to the world at large. That is our challenge.

I believe our President will once again challenge us this evening to greatness.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Illinois is recognized for 15 minutes.

THE PRESIDENT'S STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is one of those big days in Washington. It happens every year with the President's State of the Union Address. We look forward to it. It is an opportunity for the entire membership of the Senate and House to gather on the floor of the House of Representatives and bring in the Members of the Cabinet, Supreme Court Justices, the diplomatic corps, and Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President of the United States comes before us in a well-publicized event to speak from his heart about the State of the Union, our Nation.

For about an hour—some Presidents take a little longer than others—the President has center stage, as he should; he is our leader, our Commander in Chief. There is an air of anticipation during this lead-up time to the State of the Union Address because, until he speaks the words, we are never quite sure what he is going to say. The White House, whether it is under a Democrat or Republican, will tantalize us with hints and little notions, but I have found in the time I have served in Congress that sometimes they are misleading and they don't tell you the whole story. It is not until you go into the House Chamber and sit in the chair and listen to the President that you hear firsthand what is on his mind.

You are not certain, as well, about the people he will honor and pick out. It has become a standing tradition, I think since President Reagan, for the President to invite people to sit in the gallery, usually with the First Lady. They are pointed to with pride as great Americans who have done extraordinary deeds. There is a lot of speculation who will be up there. Will it be the family of a Reservist who has been activated for a potential war in Iraq, a firefighter, a policeman, or a member

of the health professions who has distinguished himself or herself in our homeland security? You are never sure. It is this uncertainty which leads to the excitement about the State of the Union Address.

But we learned today in a story published in the Chicago Tribune that some people living here in Washington, some who work on Capitol Hill, have no uncertainty about what the President is going to say. This morning, in the Chicago Tribune, in an article written by Jeff Zeleny, it was disclosed that the White House has invited a select audience of Republican lobbyists and political executives down to the White House today to hear the State of the Union Address. I think that is unprecedented. I don't think there has been a time before when a President has invited in lobbyists, special interest groups, to hear the State of the Union Address in advance.

These top strategists and opinion leaders are going to attend a "closed-door State of the Union briefing inside the White House complex." Who will be included? We are not sure of all of them. There will be about 70 top strategists, pollsters, and conservative groups, such as American Cause, founded by Pat Buchanan; Americans For Tax Reform, whose leader is Grover Norquist, someone who is well known in political circles in Washington. Then, of course, the lobbyists for the biggest corporations are going to be there in advance for the sneak preview, including personnel from AT&T and Eli Lilly, which is a major pharmaceutical company. They get a chance, before the American people, to hear the State of the Union Address.

Why would the White House want to open the doors for these special interest groups to hear the State of the Union Address before the President speaks to the American people? Well, it is certainly a special privilege he has granted to them. But it also reflects on what he is going to say in that State of the Union Address. He is certainly not bringing in these Republican strategists and business leaders and special interest groups to hear something they are going to find unsettling. He is really assembling a chorus of praise for those who will say after the speech that it is the best ever.

When the President really speaks to America and its issues, I just wonder, will we witness the same level of moral outrage from the conservative cable commandos as we heard in years gone by when special interest groups were invited to the White House? For this President to make history by bringing in lobbyists to hear the address before the people of the Nation, I am anxious to hear all of the people you see on cable channels and the reaction they will have.

Frankly, I am disappointed. I think this is a special moment for all of America. It is really not a special treat for lobbyists. Traditionally, this has been a moment for all America, to hear

the President speak from his heart. When I reflect on what the President might say this evening, I know for certain he will speak about security, terrorism, North Korea and Iraq. That goes without saying. Those will be the issues that certainly will draw together many in Congress, Democrats and Republicans, on a bipartisan basis to stand behind our fighting troops and behind America as a leader in the world.

Mr. REID. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes, I am happy to yield to the Senator.

Mr. REID. I also read that article in the Senator's hometown newspaper, and I am wondering, if this is a closed hearing, is this a focus group? And I wonder if the lobbyists don't like certain lines of that speech, or certain paragraphs or phrases, do you think he will change the speech?

Mr. DURBIN. I don't know. Someone said this morning the White House said it is baked and he is not going to change a word of it. I cannot say if they are being called in as a focus group to see if there is anything they find objectionable. I think it is probably more likely that they already know in advance they are going to have a warm reception from the special interest groups for the State of the Union Address.

Mr. REID. I ask the Senator, also, based on what was reported in the Senator's home State newspaper, it appears to me, in answering my own question, that maybe they had a lot more to do with writing that speech than one would necessarily think. I think these people already know what is going to be in the speech, if you represent Eli Lilly. You can tell about that from what went on on the floor last week.

Mr. DURBIN. Eli Lilly is a special case. You will remember when we passed the homeland security bill to keep America safe from terrorism, someone stuck in a special provision that helped that drug company, which is based out of Indianapolis, IN. There was, I guess, embarrassment all around when it was discovered. Many times, these provisions are stuck in a bill in the hopes nobody will find them. Well, they were found and many people objected to that on the floor. If the Senator will remember, we had a vote on this issue. Several Republican Senators said they were embarrassed that a drug company would get a special break in the homeland security bill, which had nothing to do with homeland security, and it was going to come out soon. Despite that momentary embarrassment, the fact is that Eli Lilly is front and center in the White House when special interest groups are called in to have a preview of the President's State of the Union Address. That is troubling. I hope the press will ask those who made this decision whether they have not compromised the integrity of that institution as relates to the State of the