

Today we were forced to make those choices that you see sometimes in the movies about who gets to stay in the life boat. It was a completely unnecessary choice.

The Senator from Oklahoma talked about one proposal costing \$4 billion and another proposal costing \$1 billion. The House wanted \$1 billion.

There is a surplus today in the unemployment insurance trust fund of \$24 billion. There is absolutely no fiscal reason we could not provide these benefits to 1 million Americans who have exhausted their unemployment benefits. We heard from colleagues on the other side of the aisle that they are categorically opposed to giving any extension of benefits beyond a certain time. This not only defies logic and defies the fiscal status of the trust fund but also defies history.

In the early 1990s, this Government extended unemployment compensation a total of five times—three times under President George Herbert Walker Bush because unemployment continued to rise for the 15th month after the so-called end of the recession. There are cases in which individuals were able to collect unemployment benefits for a total of 52 weeks because they qualified for these extensions.

Why is this so important? Because people are desperate. They had good jobs. They lost those jobs. They are looking for comparable work. They cannot find it. The record of this economy under this President is dismal. Family incomes have fallen for the first time in 8 years. Poverty is increasing. Families at all income levels are losing their health insurance left and right. Gross domestic product is growing, but it is growing too feebly to generate the jobs these people need.

Since the President took office, 2.2 million private payroll jobs have been lost. We are losing jobs. We are not gaining jobs. We are asking them to find jobs; we are setting them on a task that is extraordinarily difficult.

So what can we do in the interim?

We can at least give them unemployment compensation, extended, if necessary. It is the fair thing to do. It is the wise thing to do. The President, in his economic speech in Chicago, talked about some special \$3,000 benefit for those people who are unemployed. Let's do the mathematics. That \$3,000 represents probably a fraction of the unemployment insurance someone would collect if we voted for these benefits. That is not a good deal for the people of America—a \$3,000, one-time payment, some type of scheme in which they can use it either to pay their household costs or go to training versus receiving, on a regular basis, unemployment compensation as they look for work.

The reality, as my colleague from Montana pointed out, is that unemployment is different today than it was even 10 years ago in the recession of the early 1990s. It is different because the economy has changed.

The State which the Presiding Officer and I represent used to be a manufacturing center, not just to the United States but to the world. That is changing. As I go about our State talking to people, the unemployed are 50-year-old, former mid-level management people who used to work for a company. They did not get fired. They did not get laid off. The company went away, went out of business, moved its operations to Mexico, moved its operations to Singapore. And then you ask this person, with a mortgage, college tuitions—and the health care benefits which they used to get at work are now his responsibility or her responsibility—to go look for a job with comparable pay? They are not hiring people like that. They are looking for the 35-year-old, with a computer degree, who will work cheaper, who does not have those responsibilities of a family, of a mortgage.

That is the reality out there. That is what we are fighting about today, not the number "1 million," but a million Americans, struggling to find work, trying to find work. They need help. And we turn our back on them today. I heard my colleague, the Senator from Oklahoma, say he would never bring up extension of these benefits to people who have exhausted their benefits already. I heard the majority leader sort of talk about: Well, we want to deal with this issue, but let's get this issue done first.

The message is pretty clear to me and should be clear to the American public: We are walking away today from a million people. We should not do that.

This seems to me to be so clear and so obvious that I am, in fact, amazed and shocked at what we did. The money is there. This is a benefit for people who are looking for work. Once they find work, the benefit expires. We are talking about stimulating the economy. What is more stimulating than giving people money to pay for their household goods as they look for work?

I am more than disappointed. But we were forced today, because of the inattention of the administration and the House, at the last minute, to choose between denying benefits to all unemployed Americans or abandoning about a million—a cruel, unnecessary choice. We can do better. We should do better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If nobody yields time, time will be charged equally to both sides.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that the time be

equally charged to both sides during the quorum call I am about to suggest.

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR TRENT LOTT

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, this is the first day of the 108th Congress. I remember the former Senator from Kansas, Nancy Kassebaum, used to refer to these days as the first day of school, coming back after the recess. Of course, it is a time of celebration as new Senators gather. This one is particular in that it is a time of a new majority leader. I rise to express my confidence in and give my congratulations to Senator FRIST of Tennessee in his assuming the position as majority leader. He will prove to be an outstanding leader. The Senate and the people of the United States will be well served by his stewardship.

However, I wish to take this opportunity to make a few comments about the previous majority leader, Senator LOTT of Mississippi. Senator LOTT has been very much in the news of the last few weeks. He ultimately made what I consider to be the right decision in stepping aside so that the challenges raised to him would not get in the way of the business of the Senate or of the country. The caricature of Senator LOTT that appeared in much of the national media did not match in any way the man that I know and love.

I rise to comment briefly on the contribution Senator LOTT has made to this institution and to the Nation and take the opportunity of the shifting of power to pay tribute to Senator LOTT and the work he has done.

There are many things in his career that we could point to. This is not his funeral so I won't run through a list. But there is one in particular that stands out in my mind, which I will share with those who may be watching, that demonstrates the kind of leader TRENT LOTT WAS. I refer to the experience many of us described as the most significant of our careers, and that was the historic moment when the Senate sat in judgment as a trial for the impeachment of the President of the United States. For only the second time in our history, a President had been impeached by the House of Representatives, and we were required

under the Constitution to hold a trial to determine whether the President should be convicted of those crimes of which he was impeached.

Many in the press, many uninformed, asked: Why is the Senate wasting its time dealing with this challenge?

The Constitution left us with no choice. Once the House of Representatives had voted impeachment, the Senate was required under the Constitution to hold a trial, with the Chief Justice of the United States presiding. It was a historic time, and many of my colleagues commented that this was the most significant vote they would ever cast in their political careers.

We met in the old Senate Chamber to discuss what we should do. That was a historic meeting, off the record, if you will, because it was not here with an official reporter taking down every word. But it was an opportunity for Senators to speak freely and openly. In very solemn and somber proceedings, we discussed what we should do. I am not violating any confidences because it has been reported in the press that the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD, spoke on behalf of the Democrats as we addressed that issue. He made this point. I can't remember his exact words, but these were the words that are in my mind.

Referring to the case before us, he said: This case is toxic. It has besmirched the Presidency, and it has soiled the House of Representatives. And it is about to do the same thing to us.

I believe his analysis was correct, that the case of President Clinton and his actions did indeed besmirch the Presidency, degrade the Presidency, and I think the way it ultimately played out in the House of Representatives stained that body and left bitterness that is still producing bitter fruit. Senator BYRD warned this case, this toxic case, was about to affect the Senate.

The majority leader, who had to handle such a case, was TRENT LOTT of Mississippi. I was at his side in many of his meetings. I watched from afar in many of the other things he did. Senator LOTT handled that historic challenge with as much sensitivity, finesse, wisdom and, yes, grace as it would be possible to do.

When it was over, Senator LOTT and Senator DASCHLE met in the well of the Senate, embraced each other, and said: We did it.

Yes, they did. And they did it together. But the primary responsibility was on the shoulders of Senator LOTT. He made Senator BYRD's prophecy not come true. Instead of staining the Senate, instead of soiling the Senate the way that case soiled the Presidency and the House, it was in many ways the Senate's finest hour. The case was handled with dignity. The case was handled with dispatch. And the case was handled with a minimum of bad feelings on both sides.

There are some outside the Senate who attacked Senator LOTT and said:

You should have had a full-blown trial. You should have let this drag on for 6 weeks, even 6 months. And at the end of that period of time, maybe, just maybe, you would have had a conviction.

Senator LOTT understood that the dignity of this body and the unity of the country required the kind of handling of that case that he gave us.

History will look back on the stewardship of TRENT LOTT as majority leader of the United States with great approval and kindness. This is a man of extraordinary skills who handled himself in an extraordinary way, and all of us who sat in the Senate through that experience benefited by his leadership.

Now he is moving on to other assignments. As I congratulate Senator FRIST on his ascension to the majority leadership, I also congratulate Senator LOTT on the prospect of a continued career of contribution, perhaps in the policy area more than in the process area. He has demonstrated that he can master the legislative process as well as anyone on the planet. I expect he will now demonstrate that he can make contributions of equal significance in the policy area.

On a personal note, while he is many years my junior in this business of politics, he has acted as my mentor and my teacher. I can think of many times when I have been tangled up in the minutia and arcane nature of the way this body works, where I had nowhere else to go to get myself untangled and set straight. I called Senator LOTT and, with calmness and clarity, he said, why don't we do this and, suddenly, the Gordian knot was cut and I emerged ready to go forward in my career because of his wisdom and his guidance.

Again, I congratulate Senator FRIST. I was happy to vote for him when the opportunity came. I am looking forward to working with Senator FRIST as he demonstrates his ability to lead this body. I have every confidence that that will be a tremendous period in the Senate's history, but, at the same time, I wanted to rise and make it clear that as we embrace Senator FRIST's leadership we should recognize and pay tribute to the contribution made to this body and ultimately to the country by Senator TRENT LOTT of Mississippi.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is recognized.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I congratulate all of my new colleagues who were sworn in today, and all of those who won reelection—but particularly those who are here for the first time, and my good friend from New Jersey who is here for the second time, with a hiatus. I congratulate the new leadership on the Republican side, along with Majority Leader FRIST. We look forward to working together for the good of our country.

Today, I stand here feeling, I guess I would say, boxed in because we on this

side of the aisle who feel that the unemployment package was not adequate are faced with the choice of taking half a loaf or none. Of course, when you are in a legislative body, you tend to take that half loaf. We will do it today—or we have done it already today. But when it comes to people out of work, when it comes to the pain in the eyes of fathers and mothers, young men and women who talk about missing or losing a job, knocking on doors and not being able to find one, half a loaf is not very adequate.

I find it confounding that the other side did not allow the amendment my colleague from New York proffered. We only asked for a half hour of debate, so it cannot be that it would take up much time. We certainly do not believe that they didn't want to help the unemployed. So the only logical answer is dollars. They thought it might be too expensive. To me—the main point I want to make this afternoon is this—the contrast of our President speaking in Chicago and putting forward a \$600 billion plan of relief, mostly on the tax side—and the vast majority of that plan goes to the very highest income levels. I read somewhere that 42 percent goes to 1 percent; 1 percent of the highest income get 42 percent of the relief. One percent is 311,000. So there is \$600 billion to go to tax relief, mainly for the most well off, and there is not a billion dollars to include a million people—150,000 New Yorkers—to give them the unemployment benefits they now do not have.

How many Americans would support that? Our job is to juxtapose those two issues. I hope the media will do that. These are not two separate issues because we have not heard a single reason that we cannot take the larger bill. They say our colleagues in the House will object. Then let the American people look at them and say to them, if you can afford and you are going to support \$600 billion in tax relief, largely to extremely wealthy, high-income individuals and families, why can't you support a billion dollars for the unemployed?

If the election we just held were on that issue, what do you think would have happened? My guess is that the results would have been quite different. Frankly, our colleagues in the House and some on the other side of the aisle don't like to see this issue contrasted. The tax relief—huge amounts of it—is going to the upper income spectrums and the stingiest, the parsimonious attitude when it comes to the unemployed. It is not that we cannot afford it, because I offer to my colleagues, let's do \$599 billion of tax relief and do this billion dollars. Hardly anyone would notice, except those million people who are out of work and desperately looking for work.

So I hope we will have another opportunity to work this amendment forward. I worry that we can make a lot of speeches on the floor of the Senate, but, yes, they will say, bring it up as