

We still have significant unemployment in great parts of this country of ours. People just cannot find other work. If that is the condition—and it is the condition because this is the Bureau of Labor Statistics figures—then we have to ask ourselves, Why are we cutting off and have ended effectively providing help and assistance with unemployment compensation? It does not have to be this way.

This chart is very instructive because it shows what a different administration did when we had economic challenges. This is in the early 1990s, coming out of the recession of the early 1990s. Under President Clinton, we saw the spiking of 2.9 million jobs. It took the spiking of up to 2.9 million before the administration terminated the extended unemployment compensation funds. They were facing significant unemployment. With Presidential leadership and with the support of a Democrat House and Senate—that is true; because we did not get a single Republican vote in the Senate or in the House of Representatives—President Clinton put that into effect. We had the longest period of economic growth, price stability and job expansion than we have had in the last century. Finally, they cut off the unemployment compensation after it reached 2.9 million.

We have 2 million still unemployed and this administration has said, No way, to those workers and denied them unemployment compensation.

This chart rebuts modern thinking about who is now suffering from the unemployment and who is not. The green line represents less than a high school degree and the red line signifies college graduate. It has been the belief that with more education, there is a greater and greater opportunity to get a job. Right? Wrong. It does not necessarily follow. It can follow but it does not necessarily follow.

Over the period of the last year, we find those with college degrees are increasingly those who are affected with unemployment, even more so than those with less than a high school degree which, effectively, remains flat.

What is happening is higher unemployment is moving into the middle income. This is going to college graduates—not those who just completed 1 year but those who completed college. The red line on the chart indicates they are the ones now who have college degrees. Yet they are increasingly unemployed.

I bring back to the Senate this very important chart because it very clearly shows what is happening out there in Main Street America to the middle-income working families in this country.

Over the period of the last 5 years, what we have seen—and we are looking now from 2000 to 2004—in the purchasing power of middle-income families is their income has gone down 2 percent. But the prices for their homes or rentals have gone up 17.8 percent; health care, 50 percent; tuition for

their children, 35 percent; and utilities, 15 percent. You talk about the middle income having challenges holding on to their economic security, this is what is happening to them. Their income, in terms of purchasing power, has effectively been stable, but the costs which they have had to pay in health insurance, tuition, utilities, and home prices, let alone what has been happening in terms of their local taxes, have been going up, and they have been feeling the squeeze.

Can you imagine families with these kinds of obligations and suddenly they do not have any income at all. The only lifeline they have is the unemployment compensation. They have paid into it, and they wonder if they are going to get it. The unemployment fund is in surplus, and the Republican leadership says: No, we are not going to let you have a vote.

Finally, we should understand this very clearly about what has been happening on Wall Street. With the Wall Street recovery, the corporate profits have gone up in the last 3 years by some 37.5 percent. Yet the change in workers' wages, as this chart shows, is 1.5 percent; basically the same figures we had before.

So this is what is happening. There are those who are doing very well, and there are those who are able to go through this period of time and have a great deal of financial security. But not middle-income working families; they have not been able to do so. And this institution is not helping them. We are not helping them with any kind of increase in the minimum wage. We do not help them with the unemployment compensation. We do not help them, although we did have a positive vote. The administration certainly did not help them on the issue of overtime. We have left out 9 million Americans when it comes to pensions, which leads me into another issue in terms of health care coverage, which is another issue for us to consider.

What the Senator from Washington is attempting to do is to provide at least some temporary relief until the economy gets strong for those millions of Americans who are trying to make it, who worked hard and paid into the unemployment compensation fund so they will be able to meet the most basic and fundamental needs of their families.

Without this relief, 85,000 American workers a week are losing their unemployment compensation. Surely we can do something about it. We have a surplus fund of in excess of \$15 billion. So I would hope we would cease the obstruction of the Cantwell amendment and permit us to have a vote on the Cantwell amendment. We have had a clear majority of this body that wants to vote in favor of it. Yet we are being obstructed from being able to do that, as we have been obstructed by the Republican majority on the issue of the increase in the minimum wage.

MEDICARE AND THE UNINSURED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, for many of us, this is “cover the uninsured week,” but, for the administration, a better title would be “ignore the uninsured week.” Since the day it took office, this administration has ignored the worsening health care crisis that jeopardizes more and more families. Costs are out of control. The number of the uninsured is soaring. No family can be sure that the insurance that protects them today will be there for them tomorrow. And the Bush administration remains frozen in the ice of its own indifference.

The number of people without insurance has grown by four million since President Bush took office—and he has done nothing. Health insurance premiums have skyrocketed by 43 percent—and he has done nothing. Prescription drug costs have exploded by 45 percent—and he has done nothing.

Every day, employers shift more costs to employers or cancel coverage altogether. Every day more families are forced into bankruptcy because of high medical bills. And President Bush does nothing.

Soaring health costs and declining insurance coverage harms the poor, but they are protected to some extent by Medicaid. It is the hardworking middle class who are victimized the most. More than 80 percent of the uninsured are in working families. Fourteen million have incomes of more than \$50,000 a year. Seven million have incomes of more than \$75,000 a year. No family is more than one pink slip or one employer decision away from being uninsured.

That is wrong. You and I know it is wrong. And the American people know it is wrong. But President Bush refuses to do anything about it.

The President has read the polls showing that the American people are concerned about health care, so he pretends that he cares. As in so many areas, he talks the talk, but he doesn't walk the walk. He has done nothing. The steps he has proposed don't even deserve to be called tokenism. They actually take us in the wrong direction. They would be laughable, except that the health care crisis is no laughing matter for millions of American families.

The President touts new tax breaks for the healthy and wealthy—as if the wealthy haven't already benefitted far too much from this administration's policies. The administration calls for health savings accounts—but for millions of Americans who need health care the most, the result will be thousands of dollars in higher premiums, not savings.

The administration claims to offer refundable tax credits to help the low-income uninsured buy insurance. But those credits are inadequate to buy real coverage. Far from helping the uninsured, they would actually cause millions more to lose the good employer coverage they now enjoy. They are

such a low priority for the President that he didn't even provide money to fund them in his own budget.

The administration is proposing association health plans to lower costs for small business. But these plans are nothing more than a giveaway to trade associations that support the President, and they will raise premiums for more than 20 million workers according to CBO.

The administration proposes a Federal cap on medical malpractice awards, and calls it cost control. But the idea that you can cut health care costs by denying fair compensation to severely injured patients is a cruel hoax. Some premiums are \$100,000.

When it comes to affordable health care for the American people, this administration is all talk and no action. It is compassionate conservatism without the compassion. President Bush and the Republican Congress won't make the tough decisions to bring costs down. They won't stand up to the drug companies that profit enormously from the status quo. They won't put the need for health care for American families ahead of the greed of wealthy campaign contributors. It's time for a change.

Our colleague Senator JOHN KERRY is proposing a plan to give health care the top priority it deserves. He believes that secure, affordable health care for hard-working families is more important than tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires. His plan will provide health insurance coverage for 27 million people nearly two-thirds of the uninsured. He will cut costs for every family that pays an insurance premium.

He will take on the drug companies, so that Americans can enjoy the same fair prices paid by Canadians and Europeans. He will give every American—every American—access to the same health care enjoyed by members of Congress at the same fair price they pay. He will be a health care President—and that is just what the doctor ordered for every family that needs and deserves quality, affordable health care.

Every senior citizen now has health insurance through Medicare. But Medicare's guarantee of affordable health care remains unfulfilled, because Medicare does not cover the high cost of prescription drugs. Congress had a chance to provide a decent downpayment on prescription drug coverage last year, but President Bush and the Republican leadership hijacked that program.

The Bush Medicare bill needs to be scrapped and replaced. It is a raw deal for senior citizens and a sweetheart deal for the insurance industry and the pharmaceutical industry. It is a triumph of right-wing ideology pretending to be positive reform. It is based on a flagrant deception reaching all the way to the top of the White House. The sorry story of this legislation is a prime example of the need for

new and more effective leadership in the White House.

The Republican Medicare bill lavishes Medicare money on subsidies to HMOs and other private insurance plans—\$46 billion, according to the Medicare actuary. The goal is to undermine Medicare, make it no-competitive, and force senior citizens to join HMOs.

The administration's bill was designed to benefit drug companies and insurance companies, not senior citizens. It is not a serious solution to the high cost of prescription drugs. Because of high premiums and high deductibles, 6 million senior citizens will actually pay more in premiums for the drug program than they will receive in benefits. Another 6 million—the poorest of the poor on Medicaid—will actually be forced to pay more for the drugs they need. Three million more retirees will lose the good private retirement coverage they now have, and will be forced into the inadequate new program. That is 15 million senior citizens who will actually pay more for prescription drugs under this bill than they would pay if the bill had never been enacted.

Let me repeat that. Fifteen million senior citizens will actually pay more for prescription drugs than if this bill had never been enacted.

Even for those who do benefit from the bill, the benefits are meager. Once your spending for drugs reaches \$2,250, you fall into a hole where you receive no benefits at all until you spend \$2,800 of your own funds. If you spend \$500 a year today, you will pay more in premiums than you get back in benefits. If you spend \$1,000, you will still pay 86 percent of the cost. If you spend \$5,000, you will pay 78 percent of the costs. The bottom line is that in paying for the drugs you need, you will be better off on a bus to Canada than you will be under the Bush bill.

A key reason the drug benefits are so inadequate under the Bush bill is that it fails to do anything to control the explosive growth in the cost of prescription drugs. Drug companies will reap at least \$139 billion in windfall profits over the next 8 years. According to the Congressional Budget Office, drug prices will actually rise faster, not more slowly, as a result of this bill.

The Bush bill shouldn't be called the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement Act. It should be called the "Profits for Drug Companies Improvement Act."

The more senior citizens learn about the Medicare bill, the less they like it. The Bush administration has already squandered more than \$20 million of senior citizens' own Medicare money on thinly disguised political advertisements for the Bush reelection campaign. These misleading and dishonest advertisements are intended to persuade the elderly that this lemon of a bill is actually lemonade. But senior citizens aren't accepting those ads, because they don't trust them.

Now, the Bush administration is trying yet another disinformation campaign. Our part of the Medicare bill is a provision to license private companies to use the Medicare seal of approval to peddle discount cards to senior citizens.

The administration is attempting to hype these discount cards to try to rehabilitate their failed Medicare bill. But senior citizens understand that these Medicare discount cards are a phony and ineffective solution to high drug prices—and every day brings a new embarrassment. The \$18 million of senior citizens' own money that the Bush administration is spending to promote this program isn't persuading anyone.

The administration set up a Web site to help senior citizens choose the cards that offer the biggest discounts in its ridiculously complicated program. But it turns out that many of the prices posted on the Web site are just plain wrong. The card companies blame the Bush administration, the administration blames the card companies, and senior citizens are left holding the bag.

Studies by Families USA and the House Government Reform Committee prove what most analysts had said. The cards offer little or no savings compared to discount programs already available to senior citizens. Senior citizens will still be paying 50 percent more than Canadians pay and 50 percent more than the Government negotiates for the Veteran's administration and other Federal programs.

The Bush administration tried to rescue their program with yet another study claiming to show that the cards really were a good deal. They claimed that the earlier study had not made a fair comparison in prices. So they prepared a new table and claimed savings ranging from 4 to 10 percent.

But once again, the administration played fast and loose with the facts. The discount cards don't allow purchase of a 30-day supply of drugs. So the administration took the cost of a 90-day supply, divided it by 3 and compared the cost to a 30-day supply already available on the Internet. Once postage and handling costs for three orders are also included, one discount card offers essentially the same discount, one card is 22 percent more expensive, and two cards offer minimal savings of 4 percent and 6 percent, not counting the enrollment fee.

Everyone understands that the real issue isn't small discounts from already inflated prices. The real issue is the Bush administration's unwillingness to take on the drug companies. It won't allow Americans to buy drugs at the much lower prices paid by foreigners. It refuses to allow the Government to use the purchasing power of 40 million Medicare beneficiaries to negotiate a fairer price.

When the Bush administration first put out its flawed study, they inadvertently let the cat out of the bag. They included Canadian prices and the Federal Supply Schedule prices of the

drugs. A few hours later, they released a "corrected version" that omitted the comparison, but the damage was obvious.

Whether the issue is the real cost of their Medicare plan or the savings from their drug cards, the Bush administration has made deception a tactic and distortion a habit.

The administration's hype won't fool senior citizens or the American people. It isn't fair for Americans to pay twice as much as foreigners pay for drugs made in America by American pharmaceutical companies. It is not right that the Bush administration is fighting to protect drug company profits instead of fighting for patients. It doesn't reflect American values that legislation designed to protect senior citizens should be turned into a bonanza for powerful Republican campaign contributors.

It is wrong for this administration to continually distort the facts and deceive senior citizens. We need a president and a Congress who will stand up to the drug companies and insurance companies and stand up for senior citizens.

THE PRISONER ABUSE RESOLUTION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to comment about the resolution that will be before the Senate. We will vote on it in a very short time.

I support the resolution. The torture and other sadistic abuses of prisoners in Iraq have done immense damage already to America's reputation in the world, and the worst may be yet to come.

Protection of the Iraqi people from the cruelty of Saddam had become one of the administration's last remaining rationalizations for going to war. All of the other trumped-up rationalizations have collapsed. Saddam was not on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons. He had no persuasive link to Al-Qaida. He had nothing to do with 9/11. We have found no weapons of mass destruction.

So it is human rights that the administration turned to in order to justify its decision to go to war. On December 24, 2003—the day Saddam was captured—President Bush said, "For the vast majority of Iraqi citizens who wish to live as free men and women, this event brings further assurance that the torture chambers and the secret police are gone forever."

On March 19, 2004, President Bush asked: "Who would prefer that Saddam's torture chambers still be open?"

Shamefully, we now learn that Saddam's torture chambers reopened under new management—U.S. management.

Every day brings new photos, new horrors from the same prison and the same torture rooms that Saddam used to commit crimes against humanity. Today, it's the photo of a naked Iraqi man, his hands clasped behind his head

in terror, facing snarling German shepherd dogs held on leashes by American soldiers. According to the New Yorker magazine, subsequent photos show the Iraqi man lying on the ground, writhing in pain, blood flowing from wounds on both his legs.

President Bush has presided over America's steepest and deepest fall from grace in the history of our country. The tragedy unfolding in Iraq is the direct result of a colossal failure of leadership.

We all agree that the guards and interrogators who committed these abuses at Abu Ghraib prison should be held accountable. They should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. But the responsibility for these abuses does not lie with them alone.

On Friday, the Armed Services Committee held its first public hearing on the abuses. Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers came to the hearing to tell us what had happened at the prison, but in several instances their answers were incomplete or misleading.

Secretary Rumsfeld testified that the guards at the prison had received training on detention procedures and had been instructed to abide by the Geneva Conventions. Yet in the report on his investigation of such abuses last winter, General Taguba found that the soldiers involved were poorly trained to manage such operations. He found that neither the prison camp rules nor the provisions of the Geneva Conventions were posted in English or in the language of the detainees.

Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers testified that the abuses at the prison lasted from October to December 2003. They said that the military leadership's first indication of trouble was when a low-ranking soldier came forward in January 2004.

Yet, since the beginning of the war, the International Committee for the Red Cross had provided Pentagon officials with repeated reports of abuses at the prison. Some of these abuses, the Red Cross reported, were "tantamount to torture."

As early as May 2003, the Red Cross had sent Pentagon officials a memorandum describing more than 200 allegations of mistreatment during the capture and interrogation of Iraqi prisoners.

In October 2003, the Red Cross inspected the Abu Ghraib prison, including the unit where the worse abuses at the prison occurred. They saw prisoners being held naked in cells and forced to wear women's underwear. They saw evidence of burns, bruises, and other injuries consistent with the serious abuses that the prisoners had alleged.

After this October 2003 inspection, the Red Cross put officials at Abu Ghraib prison and at Central Command on notice that they were violating international humanitarian law. Yet October 2003 is when the military now says that the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison began, and that they didn't

know anything was wrong until 3 months later.

Clearly, the military leadership failed to respond properly to the reports and recommendations of the Red Cross. During 2003, both the State Department and the Coalition Provision Authority repeatedly appealed to top military officials to stop the mistreatment of military detainees. Secretary Powell himself raised this issue at cabinet meetings and elsewhere, pleading for proper care and treatment of detainees, but the Defense Department failed to act.

The military leadership is also responsible for putting troops in charge of the prison who were not trained to do the job. They assigned too few soldiers to the prison than were required to do the job right. They relied on civilian contractors to perform military duties, including the interrogation of Iraqi prisoners.

The military leadership failed to respond in a systemic way even after it had initiated 35 criminal investigations into the alleged mistreatment of detainees in both Iraq and Afghanistan; 25 of these investigations involved deaths. In December 2002, military doctors at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan ruled that two Afghan men in U.S. custody had died from "blunt force injuries." No one in the military has been held accountable for these homicides.

Since 9/11, top officials in the administration have shown an arrogant disregard for the protections of the Geneva Conventions in dealing with detainees. In January 2002, Secretary Rumsfeld was asked why he believes the Geneva Conventions do not apply to the detainees at Guantanamo. He replied that he did not have "the slightest concern" about their treatment in light of what had occurred on 9/11. In other words, they are terrorists, and torture is too good for them. The British magazine *The Economist* called his remarks "unworthy of a nation which has cherished the rule of law from its very birth."

It is clear that it is not enough for us merely to pass a resolution condemning the abuses. We need a full and independent investigation and fully accountability, including a comprehensive review of all detention and interrogation policies used by military and intelligence officials abroad, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, and elsewhere. The American people and the Iraqi people deserve answers, and they deserve them quickly.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

NATIONAL ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I come to the floor not to point fingers or make accusations about the tragedy that occurred in Iraq and continues to unfold. So while we are focused on international affairs and what may or may