

The American people that keep this economy running have created more than 7.2 million new jobs since August 2003—that's 40 months straight of job growth. The economy added 167,000 new jobs last December, exceeding market expectations.

Our unemployment rate is a staggeringly low 4.5 percent or as I like to put it, our employment rate is 95.5 percent. A 4.5 percent unemployment rate is lower than the 5.1 percent average unemployment rate of 2005, which was already a great year.

And a low rate of 4.5 percent is lower than the average unemployment rate of the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s, and even lower than the average unemployment rate of the boom years my friends on the other side of the aisle like to point to, the 1990s.

America's small businesses are the key to unlocking this economic success. Small businesses employ half of all private-sector employees and have generated between 60 to 80 percent of net new jobs annually over the last 10 years.

Here's the bottom line. Since August 2003, the American people have created over 7.2 million new jobs, more than the entire European Union plus Japan combined.

So understandably, this side of the aisle had this objective in mind regarding this bill: What is the best way to raise the minimum wage while keeping our high-flying economy aloft?

How could we encourage economic growth and not hinder it? How could we make sure that an increase in wages wouldn't create a decrease in jobs?

This Senate has successfully done that, by linking an increase in the hourly minimum wage, from \$5.15 to \$7.25 over slightly more than 2 years, with targeted tax and regulatory relief to small businesses, so that the small businesses that create the lion's share of new jobs in this country can remain competitive and employ even more people.

The President last December emphasized the need to pair minimum wage increase legislation with just this kind of targeted tax and regulatory relief.

In my initial speech to the Senate of the 110th Congress last month, I said we Republicans were open and willing to get things done with Democrats. And I said one of the first goals we should accomplish, working together, was increasing the minimum wage while providing relief for small businesses.

Around the same time, the distinguished majority leader struck a similar note, pledging that when it came to a wage increase plus small-business tax relief, "we are going to do it."

I am pleased to report that we have done it. An overwhelming majority of Senators acknowledged that creating new jobs and expanding the economy are more important than partisan wrangling.

And most importantly, we have taken care of the workers who will ben-

efit from a higher wage and the small businesses that grow the economy at the same time.

I am pleased this Senate is doing that, and in doing so reinforcing a vital precedent. I note that the last time the minimum wage was increased, under a Republican Congress and a Democrat President, the same precedent was set.

We look forward to working with the House of Representatives to send a final bill to the President that will be a victory for both those who earn the minimum wage and those who pay it.

When that happens, we will prove that the words of bipartisanship and comity during this Senate's first days were more than empty rhetoric.

We will demonstrate that this Senate can come together to exercise balance and judgment, and improve the lives of both the workers who earn the minimum wage and the small businesses that employ them and keep America's economy running.

And we will show that divided government need not be divisive.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the majority leader is recognized.

#### BIPARTISAN CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Madam President, first of all, I ask unanimous consent that the next cloture vote be vitiated.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Madam President, this next vote is not necessary. As a result of yesterday's breakthrough in negotiations, the base bill for the Iraq debate will be the Warner-Levin legislation and not S. Con. Res. 2. So I will vote against cloture and urge both sides of the aisle to do likewise.

The most important question that I have been asked, by popular demand, is when are we going to have a vote on Monday. I have conferred with the Republican leader on more than one occasion. We can still vote at 4:30 and complete the 30 hours prior to Wednesday, which would be our goal. So we are going to vote at 4:30 on Monday on cloture on the Levin-Warner measure, unless we work something out beforehand. Again, that is 4:30 Monday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 12, S. Con. Res. 2, a bipartisan concurrent resolution on Iraq.

Harry Reid, Patty Murray, Herb Kohl, Jeff Bingaman, Benjamin L. Cardin, Frank R. Lautenberg, Charles E. Schumer, Dick Durbin, Christopher J. Dodd, Bernard Sanders, Jack Reed, Joseph R.

Biden, Chuck Hagel, Robert Menendez, Olympia Snowe, Ron Wyden, Debbie Stabenow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 4 minutes of debate equally divided between the leaders or their designees.

Who yields time?

Mr. REID. Madam President, we yield back our time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, we yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. Con. Res. 2, a concurrent resolution expressing a bipartisan resolution on Iraq, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHN-SON) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. LOTT. The following Senator was necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 0, nays 97, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 43 Leg.]

#### NAYS—97

Akaka	Domenici	Menendez
Alexander	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allard	Dubin	Murkowski
Baucus	Ensign	Murray
Bayh	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Feinstein	Obama
Bingaman	Graham	Pryor
Bond	Grassley	Reed
Boxer	Gregg	Reid
Brown	Hagel	Roberts
Brownback	Harkin	Rockefeller
Bunning	Hatch	Salazar
Burr	Hutchison	Sanders
Byrd	Inouye	Sessions
Cantwell	Isakson	Shelby
Cardin	Kennedy	Smith
Carper	Kerry	Snowe
Casey	Klobuchar	Specter
Chambliss	Kohl	Stabenow
Clinton	Kyl	Stevens
Coburn	Landrieu	Sununu
Cochran	Lautenberg	Tester
Coleman	Leahy	Thomas
Collins	Levin	Thune
Conrad	Lieberman	Vitter
Corker	Lincoln	Voinovich
Cornyn	Lott	Warner
Craig	Lugar	Webb
Crapo	Martinez	Whitehouse
DeMint	McCain	Wyden
Dodd	McCaskill	
Dole	McConnell	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Inhofe	Johnson	Schumer
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The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 0, the nays are 97. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. LEVIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### SIoux FALLS COUGARS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the University of Sioux Falls Cougars football team for winning the 2006 NAIA National Football Championship. I would also like to recognize their coach, Kalen DeBoer, for being named the NAIA Football Coach of the Year. The Cougars championship victory in December marked the second national football title for the school in the past 10 years.

This group of young men had an extraordinary season capped by a 23-to-19 victory over the previously unbeaten University of Saint Francis. That championship victory ensured the Cougars an undefeated season and the first football title since 1996. The University of Sioux Falls did not achieve a No. 1 ranking throughout the entirety of the 2006 season. Their championship was won on the field, not in the polls.

Coach DeBoer was able to achieve this victory in just his second year as head coach of the Cougars. He succeeded legendary coach Bob Young. Under the tutelage of Coach Young, and continued now by Coach DeBoer, the University of Sioux Falls has emerged as one of the premier football institutions in the country. Over the past 10 seasons, the Cougars have amassed a 103 to 19 record while capturing eight conference titles. Faith, loyalty, commitment, and teamwork have served as the foundation to building this tradition of excellence.

The 2006 Cougars were led to the title thanks to the work of an explosive offense and a powerful defense. They averaged nearly 39 points per game while allowing only seven. Leading the way for the Cougars this season were Chad Cavender, Mike Dvoracek, Dusty Hovorka, and Trey Erickson. These four were selected to the first-team of the 2006 NAIA All-American football team. This marks the first time in University of Sioux Falls history that four players have represented the school on the first-team. Also, five Cougars earned NAIA All-American honorable mention honors. These players were Zach Campbell, Josiah Fenceroy, Jason Glasco, Letarius Lee, and Adam Paulson.

Many of the players from this year's team have spent the last 4 years as teammates. The sixteen current University of Sioux Falls seniors have compiled a remarkable 48 to 4 record, including three Great Plains Athletic Conference championships, four NAIA Championship Series appearances, and the 2006 NAIA Football Championship. This group of student-athletes should

be very proud of their impressive accomplishments over the past years.

The coaching staff, in alphabetical order, is as follows: Jon Anderson, Adam Breske, Al Christensen, Kalen DeBoer, Jeff Fitzgerald, Nick Fulton, Tom Grogan, Al Hansen, Chuck Morrell, Nate Moser, and Kurtiss Riggs.

The team, in alphabetical order, is as follows: Blake Andersen, Alex Anderson, Drew Anderson, Kyle Anderson, Jeremy Barnes, Bret Beachner, Nick Benedetto, Trevor Bowers, Curtis Brown, Tyson Brown, Zach Campbell, Doug Carlson, Luke Castle, Chad Cavender, Max Chapman, Erik Cimpl, Ross Cimpl, Kyle Cummings, Josh Daniels, Drew DeGroot, Dan DeJong, Glen Dirksen, Kyle Dreckman, Michael Dvoracek, Ernest Eaton, Brett Elgersma, Trey Erickson, Nate Everett, Josiah Fenceroy, Clint Fischer, Jason Glasco, Aaron Gunderson, Mike Hartley, Luke Hartman, Nick Haub, Adam Henglefeld, Trevor Holleman, Cameron Horton, Dusty Hovorka, Aaron Jensen, Gregg Jensen, James Johnikin, Matt Johnson, Joel Kelp, Kyle Kidd, Blake Klinsing, Brandon Koolstra, Todd Kutter, Ty Larson, Letarius Lee, John Lentz, Matt Lindgren, Tyler Lodermeier, Ryan Lowmiller, Brad Maag, Lane Mellegaard, Matt Miller, Dan Moe, Joe Moen, Tyler Mousel, A.J. Munger, Scott Neu, Tyler Newman, Matt Norgaard, Jeff Nuzum, Chris Opitz, Cody O'Reilly, Aaron Parker, Adam Paulson, Adam Perry, Weston Peterson, Darren Quaile, Nick Ramstad, Jim Rawhouser, Kyle Robertson, Jon Ross, Jon Ryan, Dan Schmeichel, Shawn Schnabel, Andrew Schoenfelder, Brady Schwebach, Brandon Sexton, George Sperry, Alex Staebell, Dominic Studzinski, Robb Tiff, D.J. Tille, Chad Traver, Brent Tuxhorn, Brooks Underberg, Derek Varin, Josh Veurink, Michael Warren, Keegan Warwick, T.J. Wendt, Ben Westerfield, Brandon Williams, and Alex Woolbright.

I congratulate the men who won this National Championship and the coaches who led the way. The University of Sioux Falls football team has proven that they are strong competitors and dedicated athletes. On behalf of the city of Sioux Falls and the state of South Dakota, I am pleased to say congratulations, Cougars. You have made us all very proud.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 470

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it now be in order to proceed to Calendar No. 19, S. 470.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WEBB). Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BIPARTISAN IRAQ LEGISLATION— MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to the bill and send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 19, S. 470, Bipartisan Iraq legislation.

Carl Levin, Joe Biden, Ken Salazar, Harry Reid, Pat Leahy, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Robert Menendez, John F. Kerry, B.A. Mikulski, Dick Durbin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Dianne Feinstein, Bill Nelson, H.R. Clinton, Herb Kohl, Ben Nelson.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, that the mandatory quorum be waived, and that if cloture is invoked, it be in order to file cloture on the bill before the close of business on Tuesday next.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the contribution of the Roman Catholic school system in the United States. From January 28 through February 2 of this year, communities across our Nation celebrated National Catholic Schools Week. This year's theme of "Catholic Schools: the Good News in Education" emphasizes the balanced and diverse educational perspective offered by Catholic education.

With more than 8,000 elementary and secondary schools across our Nation, Catholic education is an important part of educational communities across our country. My home State of Nevada is no exception. We have more than 16 Catholic schools that serve over 5,000