

their dealerships. Like her, I want to see people throughout our country be able to operate their businesses. I am certainly not here to defend any of the Secretaries or anybody else. I will say that I did have a conversation yesterday with Secretary Paulson and with Federal Reserve Chairman Bernanke. They are putting in place a facility to deal with consumer finance that hopefully will be in place by year end to help deal with some of the financing components that are stressing the automakers.

I wish to specifically address the request by the automakers. I was privileged to be part of a hearing the other day in banking where the three CEOs and the leader of the United Auto Workers testified. I was struck by the lack of coherence, the fact that we had three leaders in corporate America whom I actually have a degree of respect for. I was in some ways embarrassed for some of them. They evidently had no plan. They felt in the Senate and in the House today the time was good for receiving moneys from taxpayers. It was sort of a "get here while the getting is good," if you will. It was embarrassing to hear their testimony and the lack of thought that had been put into place as it related to the request. They had come up with a number of \$25 billion. They were actually hesitant to tell us how, as a pact, the three of them had decided to divide this money. After a lot of probing, we were able to get them to say that they have decided to divide the money based on their proportional share of the auto market.

I pressed them to find out if we did, in fact, agree to loan them this \$25 billion, would that be it? It was evident that, no, this was a downpayment and that they had done nothing whatsoever to think about what might happen after the taxpayers invested in them.

One of the questions I wish to ask is: Why would we address these three automakers as some homogeneous group? They are three different companies. They are in three different circumstances. It is interesting to me that the head of the United Auto Workers knows that they are in three different circumstances. What he said was that Ford was actually in good shape. They had made some tough decisions and done some things back in the year 2006 that have put them in place to actually survive. They have about \$23 billion of cash right now. He said he had been in to look at the books and Chrysler was actually in second place. I would have thought that Chrysler actually would have been the weakest of the three. Their books are not public because they are a private company. He laid out the fact that actually Chrysler was in a stronger position but that GM was a company that was in more disarray. So as we look at this, I find it so irresponsible that we would actually even talk about a rescue package, looking at these companies as a group. They are three very different

companies that have addressed their issues in three very different ways. I find it incredibly irresponsible to even consider looking at them as a group.

I wonder, in a market with 10 million cars being sold, why we need three domestic automakers. I wonder whether we would be better off if possibly we had two or we had one that was strong. Again, that is something that the market can decide.

One of the greatest disservices we could actually do to these automakers and to the many people who depend upon them for employment, whether they be direct employees or tier 1 or 2 suppliers, is to grant them this money. That would be a major mistake. These companies have all kinds of legacy issues they have not been able to deal with. Let me point out one. General Motors has 7,000 dealers. They probably need about 1,500 dealers. What the dealers did years ago is, they went around and got States to pass laws that said that GM could not do away with their dealerships. We have had the strong dealers actually calling our office and telling us they actually have hurt themselves by putting these State laws in place, because there are so many dealers that each of them is having trouble making a profit. It would be a tremendous disservice for us to grant money to these companies without causing them to reorganize.

There is something we have in this country called bankruptcy protection. There is something that allows companies to go in and reorganize, to put their strengths in order, do away with their weaknesses and actually carry on. I do hope as we debate this—I realize nothing is going to happen this week; this was kind of a preapplication; that we will probably be dealing with this in January—but I do hope we will look at this in a mature way and realize that these companies have not done the things they should have done, maybe that they could have done, and that possibly we can be of service to them by making them do the things they need to do.

Another example: Chrysler Company has a situation where when they idle a plant, they actually, in some cases, are obligated to pay the workers of those plants for up to 4 years beyond the time the plant is idle. I don't know of any business in the world that can survive in a healthy fashion with those types of obligations.

I have tremendous empathy for the people involved. One of these companies has a plant in our State. But I say to my colleagues, the worst thing we could possibly do in this situation is to acquiesce to this request that lacked coherence, lacked thoughtfulness, lacked a plan as to how these companies would be successful in the future, and let them go about their business in the way that they have been going about it. They will be back, if this money is granted. I hope we will stand firm, that we will be responsible with taxpayer moneys, and that even

though I am opposed to this, even if the money ends up being granted in some form or fashion, we will cause them to make the decisions that need to be made for them to actually be successful in the future.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.
The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in support of extending unemployment insurance to help the 10 million jobless Americans, the most in a quarter century, who are searching for work.

In the wake of the subprime mortgage crisis, turmoil on Wall Street, and decline in consumer spending, workers throughout this country are being given pink slips by the thousands. In fact, we are seeing record numbers today, further amplifying the depth and the seriousness of this employment crisis in the United States. The situation continues to worsen. This does not appear to be a passing trend, but, unfortunately, unless we do something quickly and appropriately, we can anticipate continuing job losses. We have already seen across the country individuals whom we know—family members, cousins, friends—who, one, are either losing their job, or, two, are being very concerned that their employment status is tenuous and at any moment they could be given the word that they have lost their job. Over the course of 1 month, national job loss numbers jumped from 6.1 percent to 6.5 percent—an extraordinary jump in 1 month. Updated State numbers, which will be released on Friday, will unfortunately likely continue to reflect this deterioration in our job markets.

Despite this bad news, a resolution of this employment crisis does not seem to be approaching. As I suggested, there are indications this will get worse before it gets better—another reason to act now to try to provide support and assistance to those people who have worked and now find themselves without a job, through no fault of their own.

In my home State of Rhode Island, these national trends are amplified dramatically. Nearly 9 percent of Rhode Islanders are now unemployed. That is 50,200 people. We are a small State with a relatively small population. Mr. President, 50,200 people are without work. They are searching for work. They are searching for answers. They are searching for help. We have to provide the help, and then the long-term answers.

Job losses in Rhode Island are occurring in all sectors. This is not just one area of economic endeavor that is under stress. Every area is under stress. Workers in manufacturing plants have been particularly hurt, and that is another consequence or another aspect of this discussion of the support for the auto industry. We have thousands of jobs in Rhode Island that in

some way depend upon the auto industry. So their fate is linked to what we do effectively, constructively to assist these companies to maintain their presence, but also to change their practices so they are not only here for a few more months, but they can evolve into a sustainable manufacturing industry that will lead the world, as it once did, in the manufacture of high-quality, economically, and environmentally sound vehicles.

We are seeing layoff notices in the financial and services industries despite all the efforts we have made to support these industries through the legislation we passed last September. These losses are from small mom-and-pop manufacturing shops in Rhode Island and go up into national financial companies that are shedding workers.

This is a problem that must be addressed. We have done it in the past. In 1991 and 2002, Congress worked with the White House to successfully extend temporary benefits when unemployment rates were significantly high. In June, I was pleased that Congress came together and passed a 13-week emergency extension of unemployment insurance for all States. This was an important step to help desperate families make ends meet. But jobs are becoming scarcer. The action we took in June has actually been overtaken by events in the world marketplace.

We have to deal with this issue, particularly in those States such as Rhode Island that are seeing unusually high unemployment rates. So far, 4,416 Rhode Islanders have already exhausted their federal benefits. They are still searching for work, unsuccessfully, but now they have lost the support of unemployment insurance.

There are 20,000 Rhode Islanders who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits. In the first week of November, another 1,347 Rhode Islanders were added to our State's unemployment rolls. These are very dispiriting numbers. They call for action, and I hope we can act.

Nationally, it is estimated that nearly 1.2 million Americans will exhaust their current benefits by the end of the year. Where do they go? They have no direct financial support through the unemployment compensation program. They have seen the value of their homes whittle down to, in some cases, less than the mortgage they owe. They are seeing pressures in every area. Unless we provide them some assistance, their ability to simply keep their heads above water—to keep their families fed, to keep a bit of hope alive—will be extinguished. We cannot let that happen.

These benefits are not handouts. These people have worked. They have paid into the program. They receive a modest weekly benefit to keep them close to making ends meet.

There is something else too. We have a task before us not simply to deal individually with men and women who have worked hard and now—through no

fault of their own, through the action of the huge economic forces worldwide—find themselves without jobs. We have to get this country moving again. We have to stimulate the economy.

Unemployment insurance helps do that. These benefits are spent right away in the local communities. These benefits are going to people who are not going to, unfortunately, be able to put it away for a rainy day. Today is their rainy day. They are going to have to go to the supermarket. They are going to have to go to the pharmacy. They are going to have to go put some gas in their automobiles to get around, to get their families around. This money is spent almost immediately on food, medicine, and gasoline. Economists of virtually every stripe believe this is one of the most effective ways to stimulate the economy, to increase consumer demand.

This is something we have to do. It generates approximately \$1.64 in gross domestic product per \$1 spent. So for every dollar of unemployment compensation benefits, we are generating additional support.

In September, I introduced bipartisan legislation to provide an additional 7 weeks of unemployment insurance to people who have exhausted their benefits, and 13 more weeks of benefits to unemployed workers in States such as Rhode Island that have unemployment rates above 6 percent.

Despite the urgent need for these extra benefits, a minority of Senators prevented this bill from moving forward. What we have seen since that date is not an improvement in the situation but a significant deterioration in the situation. We can no longer ignore acting on this critical issue.

Today there are more disturbing numbers. There is an indication also in the press that President Bush would sign a bill, but he cannot sign a bill unless we pass a bill. We have the opportunity to do that before we leave today. Since the economy continues to unravel, we cannot sit back and wait. We have to act.

In October, the House overwhelmingly passed a measure virtually identical to my legislation. We must do the same. I hope we take this action this week. We cannot wait until January. There will be more people without jobs, unfortunately, by January, and those who are having the opportunity to collect benefits bill exhaust those benefits by January. We have to act.

We have to do more than just an unemployment insurance program. We have to focus on other forms of relief that will provide not only help to Americans but stimulate our economy, such as funding for food stamps and food banks. Families are turning more to these institutions every day. It is not just the marginal American, someone who might be on the street struggling with mental health issues, who needs the assistance of those institutions. More and more families—working families—are coming to food banks

and asking for a handout, for food, to feed their children.

We can do better, and we must do better.

We also have to make investments to improve job creation and provide long-term benefits. I think this means investing in our infrastructure, putting people to work, putting people to work to rebuild this country, not in a transient, temporary fashion but in projects that will last beyond this economic crisis.

When I was a child in Rhode Island, walking around on the sidewalks, looking down, I would ask my mom and dad: What is this plaque: "WPA"? Well, it is the Work Projects Administration. That was from 1935, 1934. Well, in 1955, in 1958, in 1968, and, indeed, in 1998, and now in 2008, walk around, look at those facilities, those public infrastructures that are still serving the communities. They were investments to help people work, but investments that have spurred this economy for more than 60 years.

We have to do a lot, and we can do a lot. There are so many needs here: aging infrastructure, roads, bridges, public transportation systems, transit systems so people can get to work and get to school, drinking water systems and wastewater systems.

In Rhode Island, proposed funding for these initiatives would support \$50 million for road improvements. Some of the discussions we have had about a package—\$50 million for road improvements. It would also support \$14 million for transit operations which would assure transit operations for particularly the poorest citizens of Rhode Island. It would also support \$19.1 million for water infrastructure projects.

Across this country, these projects could generate more than 470,000 jobs. We are losing about 500,000 jobs, it seems, every reporting period. If we could reverse that and report an increase in jobs, that would not only put a lot of money into people's pockets and families' pockets, but it would also send a signal to the country that confidence can be restored, that hope can indeed be engendered.

Finally, I believe we need to provide some funding for the States and communities that are strapped by this crisis. We are looking at severe deficits. States are looking at them. Many States do not have the ability to operate beyond a balanced budget. They are going to have to make excruciatingly difficult cuts. I think we should put more money into our matching Federal Medicaid programs which will help States and help people receive health care. These investments, again, are not only compelling because of the needs of our fellow Americans, but justified because of their ability to stimulate the economy and to pick us up and move us forward.

Events over the last several months have dramatically highlighted the economic challenges we face. We are grappling with the most severe economic

downturn we have seen perhaps since post-World War II and perhaps since the Great Depression—the worst set of economic circumstances. We must do something. To sit back and watch Americans continue to lose hope, to lose their jobs, to lose their sense of the potential of this country is unacceptable. We need swift action. No more debate; we need to vote. We need to pass an unemployment compensation extension bill before we leave today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, is the Senate in morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. It is. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. NELSON of Florida pertaining to the introduction of S. Con. Res. 106 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, what is the parliamentary situation? Is the Senator from Virginia able to address the Senate?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in a period of morning business.

Mr. WARNER. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for no more than 5 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

TED STEVENS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, this may well be my last opportunity to speak on the floor of the Senate. I see my senior colleague, the senior Senator from Alaska. I come for the purpose of saying some remarks about several colleagues, including my longtime friend. If it is convenient, I will take the 5 minutes I have just been granted by the Presiding Officer because I have to go out to the CIA for a meeting that has been established for some time. I shall leave shortly after I finish my remarks.

Again, I see my friend from Alaska, and it evokes many long years of interesting and happy memories. I recall so well that when I came here 30 years ago to the Senate, Senator STEVENS was one of those who sort of took the "youngsters," as we called ourselves in those days, under his wing. He had been here 11 years, I think, when I arrived. I remember serving under the Senator when he was the whip. I remember that whip; he exercised it judiciously but with determination. All in our freshman class remember that very well.

I suppose what I remember most is that I had a very modest and brief tour of military service in World War II. I was only 17. I went in the last year of the war, as did all the kids on my block. We joined and went in. I don't know if I ever shared this story with the Senator. In those days, the boys on the block who were a year or two older than me had already gone in and started military service and were coming back on leave to visit their families. Some were severely wounded and having to stay for long periods of hospitalization. It was a dramatic period in American history.

I remember the Army Air Corps and those fellows who would come back having flown their missions in Europe, Southeast Asia, north Africa, or wherever the case may be. All of us who were 16 and 17 and getting ready to take up our responsibilities stood in awe because the nearest thing we had connected with an airplane was building model airplanes. We built all the military model airplanes, and we knew them by heart. There were those magnificent flying jackets, and they were the envy of all of us. I tried to join the Army Air Corps and went down and signed up and joined the Navy. As happenstance would have it, the Navy first called me in. I had a modest career with my generation in the training command.

The record reflects that Senator STEVENS, at a very young age, displayed courage, determination, wisdom, and leadership. His service in the Army Air Corps in World War II won him two Distinguished Flying Crosses, several Air Medals, and other decorations for flying those aircraft. He and I have reminisced many times over the different types of planes he flew—primarily the old C-47, if my recollection serves me—and flying over the hump,

which was a perilous, dangerous mission not only from enemy resistance, but if anything malfunctioned on that plane, there was no landing field below you, just miles and miles of rugged mountain terrain, much of it totally uninhabitable.

I think the Senator was under 21 when he flew those missions, and his crew exemplified the courage of the World War II generation. He, among many, deserves credit as being a member of the "greatest generation."

In subsequent years, when I came to the Senate and joined the Armed Services Committee, it was my privilege to travel to many places in this world with TED STEVENS to visit the men and women in the Armed Forces. How many times did we work together on this floor—I as an authorizer and him as an appropriator—shaping that annual bill which I regard with a sense of humility as the most important bill this body passes every year; that bill that cares for the men and women of the Armed Forces and provides the economic resources for them to train, to modernize, and to preserve and protect the freedom of this Nation. Speaking on behalf of the men and women of the Armed Forces, they are grateful to Senator STEVENS for all he has done for them through his distinguished career in the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I am grateful to the Senator from Virginia for his comments. I understand that duty calls him to go to his meeting at the CIA. I am grateful for his support.

Mr. President, just before Christmas in 1968, I was appointed to succeed Alaska's first senior Senator, Bob Bartlett. Next month will mark the 40th year I have had the honor and privilege to serve in this great Chamber.

First, and most important, I thank my family. After my wife Ann's tragic death in 1978, I thought the end of my career had come, but my dear wife Catherine entered my life in 1980, and joined by my six children, Susan, Beth, Ted, Walter, Ben, and Lily, and my 11 grandchildren, my family has given me love, support, and sacrifice, which made my continued career in the Senate possible and gave it meaning. I dearly love each member of my family.

Forty years. It is hard to believe that so much time could pass so quickly, but it has. I want everyone listening to know that I treasure every moment I spent here representing Alaska and Alaskans, the land and the people I love.

As a Member of this body, I served as whip from 1976 to 1984, as chair of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee, as chair of the Arms Control Observer Group, as chair of the Ethics Committee, as chair of the Rules Committee, as chair of the Governmental