

have the highest rate of childhood poverty—far higher than any other industrialized country; that working parents are finding it almost impossible to acquire quality, affordable child care; that Head Start openings are much greater than can be accommodated all over the country. We are saying Head Start is a program that works. It provides an opportunity for early childhood education for low-income kids.

Let's expand that program to make sure working families can take advantage of that program and let's put \$7 billion into expanding Head Start.

We also, for the same reasons, put \$2.2 billion into the child care and the development block grant program that will ensure every eligible family receives access to child care.

I know in my State—and, again, I suspect in most States in this country—people are being weighed down by very high local taxes, including regressive property taxes.

What this amendment does is provide \$5 billion for school construction, modernization and repairs, to fix our crumbling schools. What this does is not only help local property taxes and not only help our school kids get modern buildings in which to learn, it also creates a lot of jobs as we rebuild one of the long neglected areas of our infrastructure, and that is our crumbling schools.

This amendment would also provide an additional \$3 billion for LIHEAP, the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program. I just, this afternoon, spoke to the directors of various community action programs in the State of Vermont. In my State—and my State may be a little bit different than some because it gets pretty cold there. We have had 20 below zero weather in the last couple weeks. There is a real level of stress regarding the availability of LIHEAP because the cost of home heating fuels is soaring. There is just not that availability. There is not enough money in the LIHEAP fund. We would put \$3 billion more into LIHEAP, which helps, by the way, not only low-income families and senior citizens in the wintertime in cold-weather States, but it helps other families in States where the weather gets to be 110 degrees.

As I mentioned earlier, in this great country, the wealthiest country in the history of the world, we must be embarrassed that we have large numbers of people who literally go hungry, who don't have enough food. That number is growing. I know Senator HARKIN, among others, has called for a significant increase in the Food Stamp Program. That is exactly what we should be doing. This amendment would provide \$5 billion for food stamps to make sure millions of families with kids have enough food to sustain them.

Lastly, this amendment would provide \$3.8 billion to allow the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children, the WIC Program, to provide nutritious food to

over 4 million families. Kids whose mothers have good nutrition and good prenatal experience, obviously, will do better in life. We want to make sure the WIC Program has the resources they need.

So, ultimately, what this amendment is about is pretty simple: We say that in a time when millions of Americans, low- and moderate-income people, are in need, it is the obligation and the right of the U.S. Government to reach out and address those serious problems facing the middle-class and working families of our Nation. And at a time when the wealthiest people in this country have never had it so good and at the same time have been given huge tax breaks by the Bush administration, we say it is appropriate to rescind those tax breaks in order to help millions of people in need. That is what this amendment is about. It calls for a fundamental change in national priorities, and it moves this country in a very different and, I think, more moral direction. I look forward to the support of my colleagues for this amendment that we will offer as part of the budget debate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THANKING SENATORS AND STAFF

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am here today to thank the many Senators and staff who worked on this sweeping consumer protection reform. This is going to mean so much for so many children across this country. It is going to make a difference, and we are really never going to know it.

I can tell you from the parents I have met who have had to deal with their kids ingesting Aqua Dot that morphed into a date-rape drug, or another whose child swallowed a charm that was 39-percent lead, those mothers came to the Capitol because they did not want it to happen to anyone else. Today, we told them we are listening to them, and we are making a difference in the lives of families throughout the country.

The difference started with the Commerce Committee and the very good staff we have on that committee. Before I acknowledge them, I wish to acknowledge my own staff.

I am so proud of the work they did. Tamara Fucile took this issue on as a personal matter. Her children actually had some of the Thomas the Train sets. I cannot tell you to how many hearings she carried those trains, chewed on by her own children, and I would hold them up to show Senators this was a real thing. I thank Tamara, and I also

thank her children for parting with their toys, although they are recalled toys.

Kate Nilan has been doing a wonderful job with our office working on these consumer issues. In the last week, Kate was very involved in making sure that our amendment, which banned industries paying for travel, industries that the consumer protection agency is supposed to be regulating, the amendment that Senator MENENDEZ and I did get voted on in this body 94 to 0. It is because of the good work of Kate Nilan in putting that amendment together and working out the procedural issues.

I thank both of my staff members for their fine work on this bill. Tamara was also very involved in the lead standard. She originally worked with me when we said: Why would we not have a Federal lead standard for toys? Why would we have State-by-State standards and some States do not have them and they are different all over the place? We finally have an aggressive lead standard that basically bans lead in children's toys, the first year allowing some trace levels and going down after that. That was Tamara's good work.

I wish to acknowledge the Commerce staff who worked hard on this bill from the beginning: David Strickland was there every step of the way, as well as Alex Hoehn-Saric for his work, and Price Feland, a member of Senator PRYOR's staff, as well as staff of Senator DURBIN who got involved in this issue early on when Senator DURBIN and I met in Chicago with a number of the toy retailers and manufacturers that were concerned about this and knew something had to change in Washington in terms of the funding for this agency, as well as the tools they have to do their jobs.

Senator NELSON has played such an instrumental role when it came to making sure we had third-party verification, as well as the durable goods standard in the bill; then, of course, Senator STEVENS and Senator COLLINS, who assisted in getting bipartisan support for the bill, and Senator PRYOR, who managed it during this week flawlessly.

We are very excited about the change today, that I can go home tonight and tell my 12-year-old daughter—who, I have to tell you, was rather embarrassed about this whole thing when her mom was involved when it was about SpongeBob SquarePants, but when the Barbies started getting recalled, she came into the kitchen and said: Mom, this is really getting serious. So I am going to be able to go home today and tell her we did something good in the Senate.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO FRANCES GADDIE CLINKSCALES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to celebrate the life of a woman who has greatly affected the lives of so many throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Mrs. Frances Gaddie Clinkscales. For 78 years, Mrs. Clinkscales loved and invested wholeheartedly in everyone she met.

Known to those around her as "Miss Frances," Mrs. Clinkscales was an inspiration. Her time was devoted to caring for individuals, predominantly through her role as a nurse. She graduated from Durham High School in Campbellsville, KY, in 1949 and continued her education at Howard University in Washington, DC, receiving her degree in nursing. Thus began her dedication to caring for others.

Mrs. Clinkscales served at North Point Hospital in Long Island, NY, before returning to Ft. Knox, KY, to work at the Ireland Army Hospital, where she served the military community for 31 years. Mrs. Clinkscales spent her time loving those around her, not only through her nursing career but for decades after. Her devotion to her faith was expressed throughout every aspect of her life. As a community and civic leader, she worked to assure Taylor County and central Kentucky was a quality place for everyone to live.

Her participation in a plethora of organizations only contributed to the love she spread. She was a member of the Campbellsville City Council, Greater Campbellsville United, and held long terms of service on the Lake Cumberland Development Board, Habitat for Humanity, and the Campbellsville Family Resource and Youth Services Council.

Along with service to organizations such as these, Mrs. Clinkscales spent many of her later years fighting for patients receiving dialysis. In June 2007, Mrs. Clinkscales suffered from complete kidney failure and underwent dialysis. Her treatment was conducted at the Taylor County Dialysis Center; a facility that she was instrumental in opening. Mrs. Clinkscales's commitment to organizations like these and the people she worked with and loved exemplified her genuine care for the community.

Regrettably, on February 27, 2008, the Commonwealth of Kentucky lost this most respected member of our State; yet her legacy will not go untold. Mrs. Clinkscales's constant love for those around her will continue to resonate. Her infamous words to anyone she met—"pretty, pretty" and "I love you"—will be remembered. Mrs. Clinkscales genuinely dedicated her life and service to her faith and her town. She leaves behind her granddaughter and her grandson-in-law, LaQuita and Christopher Goodin; two grandsons; and seven nieces.

Mrs. Clinkscales served as an important citizen of Kentucky for decades. This service is assuredly not to be forgotten and will carry on as an example to all. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Frances Gaddie Clinkscales for her dedicated service, her example to the community, and in honoring the legacy she has left us.

ENFORCEMENT-ONLY IMMIGRATION BILLS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I regret to see that the Republicans are at it again—offering unworkable solutions to complex immigration issues that only make the problem worse and cater to the basest instincts of the far right fringe.

For 7 years, Republicans have failed to fix the broken immigration system, offering only empty rhetoric and unrealistic proposals. Democrats recognize that our country deserves better—we need to overhaul our broken system, uphold our values as a nation of immigrants, ensure our national security and protect American jobs.

It is unacceptable to have 12 million people in our country who are outside the system. Our illegal immigration problem has skyrocketed because employers know they can get away with breaking the law and abusing illegal workers. And the past 7 years have shown us that deportation alone is not the solution.

It is time to stop coddling employers who break our laws and undercut American workers. It is time to make sure employers follow our immigration and labor laws so that the law is respected, wages are fair, working conditions are decent, workers' rights are valued, and unscrupulous employers are punished. And it is time to treat immigrants with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

I have to ask why the Republicans have failed to address these very real problems. They controlled Congress for 6 years. They have occupied the White House for almost 8 years. Where have they been this whole time?

I can tell you where they have been. They have been cynically using the immigration problem to stir up local resentment and fear to divert attention away from their inaction. They have vilified immigrants, especially Latinos, making them the new unwanted class, the new untouchables. They have tried to convince Americans that declaring English the official language will solve our problems, when in fact English is already our national language, but the Government sometimes needs to use other languages to respond to health care and law enforcement emergencies. They have engaged in targeted attacks on people who are contributing to our communities.

I urge them to drop their rhetorical attacks that cater to the extreme right wing of their party. I urge them to listen to the American people, who want real solutions. Americans understand

that immigration is a complex challenge that requires a comprehensive solution. They know that we need to address the situation of the 12 million illegal immigrants in the country, requiring them to register with the Government or face deportation; that we need to deport those who have committed serious crimes or represent a threat to our national security; that we need to meaningfully go after employers who flaunt the law by hiring those who are not authorized to work; and that we need to ensure that American workers are not harmed by U.S. immigration policy.

We can do this. We can uphold the rule of law. And we can do it without sacrificing our proud tradition of immigration.

The American people understand the issues. Why can't the Republicans?

Instead, they are proposing to deny local communities funding for community policing because such communities recognize that working with immigrant communities helps combat crime and lawlessness. They would force all American workers to prove eligibility to work based on a database that is so flawed it will result in denial of employment to millions of authorized workers, including American citizens. They would impose jail sentences on illegal immigrants who have not committed crimes, further overloading U.S. prisons. Those are just a few of the unworkable proposals they have introduced today, blithely ignoring the untold harm such ideas will cause to the American public.

This Senate passed comprehensive immigration reform in 2006. That bill faced head on the many aspects of the immigration system that are broken. It recognized that it is impractical to deport 12 million illegal immigrants. And it is undesirable—the majority of these people are playing a key role in the U.S. economy, taking care of our children, mowing our lawns, and harvesting our crops.

But that legislation also recognized that the Government must seize control of our immigration system. Border enforcement that is both effective and humane must be implemented. Employers who knowingly break the law and hire illegal immigrants must be punished. By hiring people who are not authorized to work, these bad actors are also violating labor protections in place to protect American workers.

The 2006 bill failed in the House, where the Republican majority instead chose to grandstand the issue and push an enforcement-only bill. Now we are seeing our Republican colleagues in the Senate do the same.

Let's stop the sham. Let's negotiate a real solution. Let's go back to the table, roll up our sleeves, and give the American public what it deserves: an immigration system that works, that is orderly, and that ensures that the system works for Americans. Anything