

Our troops are heroes who are sacrificing for this Nation. It is time for this Government to wake up and provide them with the care they need.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to express my appreciation to one of the best soldiers we have ever had in the Senate, the Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY. No one looks out for the troops more than she does. Her statement today is certainly reflective of a problem we have with suicide, which I know something about.

LYLE SENDLEIN

I want to make one brief correction in the statement I gave this morning—not a correction, an addition. I talked about National Football League players and how they are not treated right, the old-timers who have been hurt playing professional football.

I talked about someone I went to high school with by the name of Rupert Sendlein, who was a fine high school football player. But his son was an All-American at the University of Texas, played many years of professional football.

What I said this morning is that his grandson, Rupert's grandson, Lyle, was also a star All-American football player at the University of Texas. What I failed to mention is he started a number of games this year for the Phoenix Cardinals. He is much bigger than his father and his grandfather. He is 6 feet 6 inches, weighs 310 pounds, and is also a professional football player. I want the RECORD to reflect that I forgot to mention he was playing professional football.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

There will be no rollcall votes today. I am disappointed we have had one rollcall vote all week. There is no reason to point fingers. It sometimes happens. We have two extremely difficult areas of legislation, one dealing with the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the other dealing with the stimulus package. These two things have been very difficult to work out.

I have been told, with the last conversation I had with the Speaker, as a matter of fact, to try to work out one of the chinks we had on our side with the FISA legislation. I think that is worked out on our side. You never know what is going to come up.

But that is the way it is. It is my understanding the Republicans are going to now, once the agreement has been written, they are going to hotline that and see if we can get that done. But regardless of that, the Republican leader and I spoke a while ago, and we hope we can get this done so it will give us a way to end this early next week.

But there will be no votes today. It would not be fair to everyone to start on this bill, as we would not be able to

do it for another 45 minutes or an hour the way things go.

I wish to say a couple things. The package we got from the Senate Finance Committee yesterday deserves the attention of the American people and deserves the attention of this body, Democrats and Republicans. Why? Because it is a stimulus package. Is there anything wrong with the House package? Of course not. It is a good package. But ours is so much better. If we are talking about stimulating the economy, I think we need to understand that 21.5 million seniors will stimulate that economy. And they would get one of these rebates, all 21.5 million of them.

If we are concerned about stimulating the economy, who would spend it more than disabled veterans? We have 250,000 disabled veterans who are part of our package. That is important and that is good.

Unemployment benefits. I am not here to boast about it, but my State, the State of Nevada, for the first time in a long time, has a problem with unemployment. We had, for 20 years, the most booming housing market in the country.

People thought they were economic geniuses. They were buying homes and selling them. But when the downturn came, almost half the people who are in foreclosure did not live in the home. They are buying them for speculation purposes. They made a lot of money in the previous years, but the man came to the door and said: You cannot do that anymore.

So unemployment is a difficult problem we have. I visited this afternoon with the labor leaders of southern Nevada and northern Nevada. We have a real problem. Unemployment benefits are part of the Senate Finance Committee package. It is important and deserves a vote. We are going to have one on this at the right time.

Also, housing. The President in his State of the Union message talked about a number of items. One of the things he talked about was to set up a tax-free bond provision. In the past, most of these bonds have been used to build new homes. Well, we are not building new homes.

So what the President wants and Senator JOHN KERRY wants is to use these bonds to refinance homes. A great idea. The President likes it. We like it. That is part of the Senate Finance Committee package.

We also have in this package something, again, being very provincial, talking about something important to the State of Nevada, renewables. We have to ween ourselves from this oil that we get from deserts around the world. Venezuela, and some of the most tyrannical governments in the world in the Middle East. They are shipping us oil every day and around the rest of the world. Venezuela, interestingly enough, the leader of Venezuela comes to the United Nations and calls our President names.

Now, the fact is, before the United Nations, on American soil, no one should have the right to call my President names like this man did. What we should have told him is: Keep your oil.

We couldn't do that. We depend on his oil. We depend on Venezuelan oil.

This legislation that is coming from the Senate Finance Committee sets up some tax incentives for people to develop renewable fuels. People say: Is that going to stimulate the economy? You bet. If we provide tax incentives for these companies, they will start investing tomorrow—tomorrow—which means jobs; not scores of jobs, not hundreds of jobs, not thousands of jobs, tens of thousands of jobs. In the little town of Searchlight, NV, where I am from, I got a call when I was home from Senator Richard Bryan. He owns some property a few miles out of Searchlight. He said: They want to put up some windmills on your property. Do you want them to do that?

I said: Look, I don't want anyone to think I am getting any money from windmills, so have them put up all the windmills they want. I don't want anything from it. So put up the windmills.

Now I understand they are going to put as many as 200 of these huge windmills near my town of Searchlight. These windmills would be maybe 2½ miles from my home. Good, 200 megawatts of electricity. And they are waiting for tax incentives. Right now we have tax incentives for a very short period of time. What we have done with the Senate-passed provision, it will extend some of them up to 2 years because there is already a year to go on some of them.

Also extremely important, the business package is something for which the business community is clamoring. The House package has some good tax incentives in it for small business and businesses, but ours is better. This is in no way to criticize what the House did, but it is also underlining how good our package is. So we are going to work to pass the Finance Committee bill.

I have been told—I got a couple Blackberries today—by Members of the minority, the Republicans, surprisingly, but I don't want to mention names on the floor because things can always change—but I was surprised that people are supporting this, Republicans are supporting our package. So I think we can get 60 votes. If not, we are sure going to try. I think as time goes on and people look at what we have done, it is going to become even more appetizing. It is going to be better each day that goes by. So we will get to this legislation long before the cutoff date that I said we would complete it; that is, February 15. We have 15 days to go. We are going to finish this bill, I would hope, early next week or sometime next week. We are certainly going to try.

One of the calls I got today was from AARP. This organization, I don't know how many members they have, but millions. The one thing they have identified this past year is this. This is going

to bring the AARP out to tell every Senator, all 100 of us, that this is the most important thing they have had in a long time before the Senate. It will give 21½ million seniors a few dollars to spend to make this economy better. We are going to do it as expeditiously as we can. We believe it is the right thing to do, and we are going to move along in that manner.

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

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

RECOVERY REBATES AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 566, H.R. 5140, and I send a motion to the desk, a cloture motion.

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

The legislative 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, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 566, H.R. 5140, the economic stimulus bill.

Max Baucus, John D. Rockefeller, IV, Kent Conrad, Jeff Bingaman, Blanche L. Lincoln, Debbie Stabenow, Maria Cantwell, Ken Salazar, Herb Kohl, Daniel K. Inouye, Byron L. Dorgan, Mark L. Pryor, Robert Menendez, Jon Tester, Christopher J. Dodd, Barbara A. Mikulski, Joseph I. Lieberman.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum be waived and the cloture vote occur at 5:30 on Monday, February 4.

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

Mr. REID. I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

Mr. REID. Finally, let me say, I appreciate the patience of my counterpart, Senator McConnell. On Tuesday, I can't really say this; we weren't that close. But all day Wednesday, all day today, we have been this close. We have had the FISA thing worked out so many different times, and each time—not each time but a number of those times I either sent a message to the distinguished Republican leader or actually called him, sent him a letter. I have really tried very hard to finish this. I want to do it because we have a February 15 cutoff date. I don't want to jam the minority, and I don't want to jam the House. I think we have an obligation as a body to get something over

there as quickly as possible, “over there” meaning to the House. Because once that happens, I would like to think that then it is up to the House and the Senate to work this out. But we know how conferences work. The White House is going to be heavily involved in what the final product is because there is no need, at least in my estimation, to pass something that has “veto” written all over it. If it comes to that, then I can accept a veto. But at least we need to give the White House an opportunity, after we pass whatever we do here, and the House has already done their work, that when we do this conference, we know and have input from the White House. If the decision is made after that, we are going to just go forward anyway. That is what we do. But I want to make sure everyone understands, I am trying to do this as fairly as I can, recognizing there are heavy emotions on both sides of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act extension we are trying to do. There are divisions within the Democratic caucus. Not all Democrats agree how it should be handled. That is why we have worked so hard coming up with this agreement to move forward on it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I certainly don't fault the majority leader, but this has indeed been an exasperating week. We had our one and only vote last Monday and have had none since. At that time I was optimistic that we were on the cusp of two important bipartisan accomplishments at the beginning of the second session of the 110th on two extraordinarily important issues. We had seen on the stimulus side an example of the administration and the Speaker of the House and the Republican leader of the House coming together behind a package and passing it in record time, by a stunning, overwhelming majority, and sending it over to us. We have appeared to be on the verge of getting a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act out of the Senate basically in the same form it came out of the Intelligence Committee, 13 to 2, a Rockefeller-Bond proposal which the President has indicated he would sign.

My optimism waned somewhat during the course of the week, but I heard my dear friend, the majority leader, reiterate once again that he thinks we can finish both of these jobs, and finish them soon, and hopefully get back about that on Monday. I am hoping for a better week next week. We are ever so close to achieving something important for the country in two areas that are of great concern to the American people, the state of our economy on the one hand and protecting us from terrorists on the other. Hopefully, next week will be a better week.

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

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

HEALTH INSURANCE CARDS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise to express some disappointment with some items that we were not able to accomplish last year. I hope we will quickly turn to these priorities the first thing this year.

My wife Diana and I travel to different parts of Wyoming most weekends. The No. 1 issue on people's minds is health care. Well, maybe it is the economy. But when they talk about the economy, they are talking about health care. They may be talking about some housing crunches. They may be talking about some other things. But I can tell you that to a person they think health care is a big part of the economy, and health care is someplace that we ought to be doing something. They all ask me what I am doing to make sure they have health care. I tell them about the things I am doing to increase access, to decrease costs, to promote informed choices, and to ensure that health care is more affordable, and everyone gets it.

I also want to say, everyone understands it. Our constituents deserve our help. I hope we are able to really do something on health care early this year. This doesn't need to be the subject of every debate by the Presidential candidates. There is a lot of overlap in what the Presidential candidates are saying. The people don't want to wait until November in order to be able to wait until the next year in order to wait for us to do something. There is plenty of things out there that can be done. So I hope we are able to do something about health care, and do it now.

It is time for real action. All eyes are on this Congress to get something done. After this last week of having one vote, I think they are hoping we can either get FISA done or maybe we can get a stimulus package done. Get something done. Maybe it would be easier to be doing something in the area of health care. That is a big concern of theirs.

It is shameful we haven't been able to make sure that all Americans have access to affordable health insurance. I am saying: Do something. The people of Wyoming are saying to me: Do something. Even if it is wrong, it will at least be something. And it might help.

Now, as the senior Republican on the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, I spend a lot of time working on solutions to our health care crisis. I have even talked to