

The arguments of the chairman and ranking member do not relate, in many cases, to the amendment that has been put forward. The Senator from Missouri just made the argument that my amendment differs from the use limit provisions for emergency surveillance because my amendment would limit the use of information about foreign targets. But that is not true. That is not the amendment I offered. My amendment only puts limits on information about U.S. persons. The Government can always use information about foreign persons.

With regard to the comments of the Chair of the committee, the supposed burden of identifying which communications involved U.S. persons only comes up if the Government starts its targeting procedures before it gets court approval, and then fails to keep track of what it is collecting during that time. And it only comes up if the Government procedures are targeting Americans in the United States, in which case I think there are overwhelming policy and constitutional reasons why this information needs to be retrieved and its use limited.

Moreover, if the intelligence community is concerned about this potential burden, it can do what it says it already does with information gathered using the PAA, and that is to label it. Then it shouldn't have any problem finding it later on; it shouldn't be cumbersome.

The arguments of the chairman and ranking member would yield the following result: We set up rules for the Government, the Government doesn't follow the rules, and there is simply no consequence at all. The law has no teeth. There is no incentive for the Government to follow the rules.

Again, under my amendment, the Government can use information even about U.S. persons if it indicates a threat of death and serious bodily harm, and the FISA Court can allow the Government to use any information if the Government fixes the defective procedures. On that point, I am very troubled by the arguments of the Senator from Missouri. He says that my amendment will not even allow the Government to fix the problem with its procedures. That is absolutely false. I specifically stated that the Government is given an opportunity to fix the problem. If it fixes the problem, the FISA Court can allow it to use the information.

If the Government gets a complete free pass and faces no consequence whatsoever for adopting and implementing unlawful procedures, then the law's requirements for targeting and minimization procedures and the FISA Court's oversight of these procedures have no meaning. The Government would be allowed to intrude on the private conversations of Americans with no consequences.

This amendment contains a very modest series of provisions. It gives the court and the Government tremendous

flexibility. If the Government makes even a reasonable effort to address the concerns of the FISA Court, there will be no disruption of the information the Government needs—and, of course, none is intended.

I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, in two sentences, thousands of targets in the Senator's amendment, thousands of targets, all foreign means hundreds or thousands of pieces of intelligence. Intelligence does not come as one lump. It is an enormous array of collection of all kinds of things which are stitched together over time. All that intelligence could be lost under the Feingold amendment if there were only U.S. person information that was involved.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Madam President, in response to the Senator from West Virginia, it is true that the use limits in my amendment would apply to any information about U.S. persons gathered under unlawful procedures, other than information indicating a threat of bodily harm. That is why the amendment provides significantly more flexibility to the Government than the use limits for emergency surveillance. The FISA Court can allow the Government to use even information about U.S. persons as long as the Government corrects the defective procedures. That is a huge exception that is not present in the emergency use limits provision.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will suspend, the Senate is operating under a previous order for 5:20 p.m.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. is to be divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republican leader controlling the first 5 minutes.

Who yields time?

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, the Book of Proverbs teaches:

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

This afternoon, the Senate will begin to address whether we honor our moth-

ers and fathers, our grandmothers and grandfathers. The Senate will begin to address whether we extend needed stimulus checks to 20 million seniors whom the House of Representatives left behind.

The author Pearl S. Buck said:

Our society must make it . . . possible for old people not to fear the young or be deserted by them, for the test of a civilization is the way that it cares for its helpless members.

This afternoon, the Senate will begin to be tested. The Senate will be tested whether it cares for 20 million seniors or deserts them, as did the House of Representatives.

America's seniors deserve to get stimulus checks every bit as much as other Americans. They worked hard, very hard all their lives. They paid a lifetime of taxes. They contribute to the economy. And with the economy turning down, seniors can use the stimulus checks every bit as much as other Americans. Everyone knows the Social Security check does not pay the bills. The average retiree's Social Security check is about \$1,000 a month, and with the current hard times and gas, food, and health care costs all increasing, it makes it even more difficult for them.

Two out of three Social Security beneficiaries get most of their income from Social Security. Two out of three get most of their income from Social Security. Social Security is the only income for nearly one in five seniors, and without Social Security, most older Americans would live in poverty. Without Social Security, more than 50 percent of senior citizens would be living in poverty today.

Because they can use the money, seniors are excellent targets for economic stimulus checks. Because they can use the money, they will spend it quickly.

The chart I have next to me is a reminder that the Senate bill provides rebate checks for 20 million Americans. The House of Representatives excludes rebate checks for these 20 million Americans.

Americans over age 65 spend 92 percent of their incomes. Households headed by a person over age 75 spend 98 percent of their income. That is higher than any other demographic group over the age of 25. Seniors spend their money. That means checks sent to seniors will have a greater bang for the buck in terms of helping the economy. The Finance Committee amendment will help 20 million seniors left out of the House bill. The Finance Committee amendment will provide seniors with rebate checks of \$500, and the House bill will not help those 20 million seniors.

The Finance Committee amendment will also provide rebate checks for a quarter of a million disabled veterans who receive at least \$3,000 in non-taxable disability income. The Finance Committee amendment would make them eligible to receive the same rebate checks as wage earners and Social Security recipients. It is not right to

exclude 250,000 disabled veterans from getting a rebate check, which is what happened under the House bill. Those folks will get rebate checks under the Senate bill and the Veterans' Administration will distribute the rebates. The House bill, again, does not provide disabled veterans who don't pay taxes with rebate checks.

The Finance Committee amendment would provide an additional 13 weeks of unemployment insurance, and high unemployment States will qualify for an extra 13 weeks. The House bill does not provide an extension of unemployment insurance, whether it is 13 or the extra.

Almost a million more Americans are unemployed today than there were a year ago. One million more are unemployed today than a year ago, and 69,000 additional unemployed workers filed claims last week.

The Finance Committee amendment has been endorsed by AARP, the Seniors Coalition, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Officers Association of America, the American Legion, the United Spinal Association, and the Disabled American Veterans.

Again, seniors groups and disabled groups strongly endorse the Finance Committee amendment, clearly because they get benefits.

Let us listen to our fathers who gave us life and not despise our mothers. Let us not desert our seniors or disabled veterans or unemployment workers. Let us move to proceed to the stimulus bill.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order and pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion which the clerk will report.

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, 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.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 566, H.R. 5140, an act to provide economic stimulus through recovery rebates to individuals, incentives for business investment, and an increase in conforming and FHA loan limits, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would vote "yea."

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 80, nays 4, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

#### YEAS—80

Akaka	Durbin	Murkowski
Alexander	Ensign	Murray
Allard	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Barrasso	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Baucus	Feinstein	Pryor
Bayh	Grassley	Reed
Bennett	Harkin	Reid
Bingaman	Hatch	Roberts
Bond	Hutchison	Rockefeller
Boxer	Inhofe	Salazar
Brown	Inouye	Sanders
Brownback	Isakson	Schumer
Bunning	Johnson	Sessions
Burr	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Kohl	Snowe
Cardin	Kyl	Specter
Carper	Landrieu	Stabenow
Casey	Lautenberg	Stevens
Cochran	Leahy	Sununu
Coleman	Levin	Tester
Collins	Lincoln	Thune
Conrad	Lugar	Voinovich
Cornyn	Martinez	Warner
Craig	McCaskill	Webb
Crapo	McConnell	Whitehouse
Dodd	Menendez	Wyden
Dole	Mikulski	

#### NAYS—4

Coburn	Hagel
Corker	Shelby

#### NOT VOTING—16

Biden	Dorgan	McCain
Byrd	Graham	Obama
Chambliss	Gregg	Vitter
Clinton	Kennedy	Wicker
DeMint	Kerry	
Domenici	Lieberman	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 80, the nays are 4. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have been told by the Republican leader what to me is incredible. We have two issues this week, among others, that we need to complete. One is the stimulus package, and the other is FISA.

They are not in order of importance, but they are both issues we need to complete. I have been told we are not going to do anything. That is why I had to have the vote called before 6 o'clock. The 30 hours will run out a few minutes after midnight tomorrow night.

Now, they are going to waste 30 hours of the people's time on nothing. They will not allow us to work on FISA to complete it. The President said he is not going to extend it any more than one time for 15 days. We wanted to finish this piece of legislation. They are not allowing us to work on it.

On the stimulus package, the President told us last Saturday in his radio address: We need to have Congress complete this.

We are trying. We are trying, but we are told now that, no, we cannot do this. We need the 30 hours postcloture.

I hope everyone can understand what we are trying to accomplish. We are trying to accomplish the work on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that the President said he so badly needs. We are trying to complete the stimulus package the President so badly needs. We have the House bill. We just voted to proceed on that. Now we are going to use the 30 hours postcloture, which, to me, is something that is difficult to comprehend.

But, of course, why should we be surprised? Last year, the Republicans filibustered 64 times—64 times—wasting the people's time, breaking all records. They broke the 2-year record in 1 year in the number of filibusters. But here we are starting again—the same thing. Rather than legislate, maybe they are afraid these votes that have been worked out on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—maybe they are afraid some of them will pass, or maybe on the stimulus package, the Finance Committee package that we have, which is tremendous.

What does it do? It includes 21.5 million seniors who are not in the package we got from the House, 250,000 disabled American veterans who are covered. Unemployment benefits are extended. People who have been out of work for 13 weeks or more will get additional unemployment benefits. That is in the package that was brought to us on a bipartisan basis by Senators Baucus and Grassley.

In addition to that, we have provisions in this bill that are so important to our staggering economy. The homebuilders are in town. They are running ads on television. They are visiting Republican offices tomorrow to say: Vote for this. They need it because it has a tax provision in there, a loss carryover that will allow them to continue building homes, getting people in homes. It is so very important we do this.

As I told the Republican leader, we are also going to add something that was not in the Finance package that will allow people who have no money, the so-called LIHEAP people, who do not have the money to pay their heating bills—they have to make a choice

on whether they are going to have warm houses, whether they are going to be able to get their drug prescription filled, or whether they are going to be able to buy some groceries this year. We have money that will help, and it will go right into the economy. Everything I have talked about will stimulate the economy. Are the Republicans afraid that we will bring this matter to the floor, and it will pass? Because it certainly should pass. Economists up and down the line—conservatives, liberals, moderates—say this is what is needed.

We are not complaining about the House package. It was a good first step, and we appreciate what they sent us. But it is a first step. And shouldn't we be legislating here rather than stalling for time for fear somebody is going to have to take a tough vote either on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act or on the stimulus package?

We are ready to work, as we were all last year. We were at a disadvantage early in the year. Of course we were, because TIM JOHNSON was sick. He is not sick now. He walks into this Chamber like any other of the 99, and he is ready to work as many hours as we have to work. But now we have a majority, 51 to 49, not 50-49 anymore.

On the package we are going to vote on, whether they make us wait until Thursday or Wednesday, whenever it is, we are asking nine Republicans of good will to vote with the American people and pass this stimulus package.

I have said before—this morning—this matter has to go to conference anyway. We are not slowing up or stalling anything. It has to go to a conference because this House package allows benefits to go to people who are undocumented, and that should be changed.

I am dismayed we are going to have to stay in session tonight and do nothing and all day tomorrow and do nothing. But that is what I have been told. And I think it is incredulous, amazing, and not very good for the American people.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SANDERS). The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if we ended up doing nothing tomorrow, that would be like last Tuesday, last Wednesday, and last Thursday, in which we could never get a vote. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday we could not get a vote because we could not get an agreement on the FISA bill.

Finally, last Thursday night, we get an agreement on the FISA bill, and the majority leader tells me he will give us the paper—in other words, what he wishes to bring up on this stimulus package—last Thursday night. In addition, last Thursday, he says if that is defeated, of course, we will amend the House bill. Neither of those things apparently is going to happen.

No. 1, we got a few moments ago the version of the Senate Finance Committee package that the majority lead-

er wants to call up. We wish to read it. It is a fairly extensive package. Secondly, apparently it is no longer the case that if this package is not approved that we will amend the House bill. We all know the House bill needs to go back because it needs to be fixed because of the illegal immigration problem.

The majority leader has been arguing all along that the House bill was inadequate. So it would make no sense at all, if whatever the final version of the Finance Committee provision is not approved, why we would not want to add seniors and veterans and fix the immigration problem to the House bill.

There is a certain amount of spin in politics, but this is beyond spin. These are the facts. Three days last week—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—there were no votes on FISA because we could not get an agreement. Finally, on Thursday, we get an agreement on the FISA amendments, and the majority leader tells me he is going to give us the paper on what he is going to bring up on the stimulus. We got it a few moments ago. It is not unreasonable for the minority to read the proposal. To suggest from that it is a certainty we will not have anything voted on tomorrow, I would suggest to my good friend, the majority leader, is nonsense. We will insist on reading it. It is in the process of being read now. When we read it, we will be happy to communicate further with the distinguished majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, to show the absolutely dilatory tactics of this Republican minority, think about last week. My friend, the Republican leader, said we did not have votes last week. Why didn't we have votes last week? They would not let us have votes.

During the time that Rockefeller, Leahy, Bond, and Specter were trying to work something out on FISA, we wanted to finish Indian health. No, you can't do it. You can't do Indian health. Indians can wait another 6 years. They have waited 6 or 7 years during this administration. What is another few weeks for the Indians? They, according to the Republicans, don't matter that much anyway, as they have been treated like—the worst health care we have in America today is on our Indian reservations, and the Republicans don't seem to be at all concerned about that. So Senator DORGAN brought a bill to the floor, and we have been rocked and socked and pushed and pulled. We can't do that either.

The other thing we could have done last week—of course, we have an agreement to do a package that has been held up by the Republicans for a year dealing with bills that are some 45 in number—energy bills—that usually are handled just like that, in wrapup. Oh, no, not now, not with this Republican minority, we do not do them.

I suggested we go to those last week. No. Work out FISA, the President's fa-

vorite, his ability to spy. That is what he wants. The problem is that he wants to do it not in keeping with the Constitution, which raises some concern with us and the American people.

So, no, we could not do anything on Indian health, we could not do it on the energy package, until we got an agreement on FISA. It is obvious what is being done here. The Republicans are trying on FISA to do what they did last August. Even though the President has been forced to extend this for 15 days, they now want to do what they did in August: Stall it until the last day so we are forced to do something here and send it to the House so the House has no time to do anything about it.

The House has passed something. What we want to do—what we think is good government—is pass the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and do it quickly so the House and the Senate—Democrats and Republicans—have an opportunity to work together to come up with something to give to the President that is not 1 minute before midnight on the last day of that legislation.

It is not as if this picture has not been seen before. This is the same picture we had to deal with all last year—all last year. Every inch we have been able to grind out has been tough because there has been a stall that has been ongoing with this White House and this Republican minority.

For 6 years, Congress was ignored by this President—ignored. There was not—in his mind, there was not a legislative branch of Government. He did not have to deal with it because the Republicans in the House and the Senate gave him anything he wanted. Why wasn't there a veto? Because there was nothing to veto. He got everything he wanted.

Last year, suddenly some people in the White House, at least, came to the realization that there was another branch of Government that the Founding Fathers put in the Constitution. So last year they were forced to realize that there was a legislative branch of Government. We had to prove to the President that we were part of the process. We were able to get some things done, but it was difficult, and we had 64 filibusters to overcome. I would have thought this year would be a little different. We have a Presidential election. We have many Senate seats that are up. I would think the Republicans would like to get something done this year. I would have thought this continual stalling that is going on might reflect on these elections we are going to have next November, that maybe there would be a new day in Washington, that the Republicans are used to being in the minority and would try to work with us on a bipartisan basis to get some things done. But it does not appear that is the way it is going to be. If that is the way it is going to be, that is the way it is going to be, and we will continue to work around their dilatory tactics.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have before us—last week and this week—two measures that are overwhelmingly bipartisan. We have a FISA proposal—Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act proposal—we tried repeatedly last week to get some votes on, and to no avail. That came out of the Intelligence Committee 13 to 2—the Rockefeller-Bond bill—overwhelmingly bipartisan, which would be signed by the President. That would be a significant accomplishment on a very important issue to the American people.

With regard to the stimulus, the American people witnessed something they rarely see. They saw the Speaker of the House—a Democrat—the leader of the House Republicans, and the Secretary of the Treasury have a joint press conference among the three of them, indicating they had an agreement on a stimulus package that we could pass rapidly.

Senate Republicans have been prepared to do that. It came over to us January 29. The majority leader felt that the Senate Finance Committee needed to reconvene and do it a different way.

This was a situation where you had the Democratic leader of the House, the Republican leader of the House, the Republican leader of the Senate, and the President of the United States all on the same side. That is pretty close to bipartisan. But, no, my good friend, the majority leader, said the Senate needed to do it differently, in spite of the fact that everyone was saying the two most important things to do with regard to a stimulus package were to keep it targeted and do it quickly. We had an opportunity to do that. We may have an opportunity to do it again. But make no mistake about it, no amount of finger-pointing or no suggesting that just because you file cloture motions, that amounts to a filibuster. Nobody believes that. You can't just run around routinely filing cloture motions on everything and then claim there are filibusters going on.

In fact, the message from the last session was: When you meet in the middle, you get things done. It finally happened in December: an omnibus spending package that met the President's top line, \$70 billion for Iraq and Afghanistan without strings attached, an AMT without raising taxes on anybody else, and an energy bill that neither raised taxes nor raised rates in the Southeast. All of that was accomplished at the end of meeting in the middle.

Now, in spite of all of this back-and-forth between my good friend, the majority leader, and myself, we are pretty close on these two issues as well. The American people are expecting us to cooperate. But I repeat: We are going to read the proposal which we got some 15 minutes ago. I don't think anybody in America would think that is an unreasonable request. When we get

through reading the new stimulus proposal, which I was told we would get last Thursday night, we will respond to my good friend, the majority leader, and we will see how we can go forward to accomplish two important things for the country. In the end, they will be done and must be done on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, to show you, with all due respect, how shallow this statement just made by my friend is, let me just say this: It is a public record, what came out of the Senate Finance Committee. It is a public record. You can read it on the Internet, what is in the stimulus bill. It came out days ago—days ago—not Monday, not today, but days ago. Last week, it was reported out. I believe it was on a Wednesday that it came out. I told my friend that we added LIHEAP to it. One reason I added it is because the Republicans want LIHEAP. Republicans want it. Why not have a chance to vote on it? So to talk about: We want a chance to read this bill—this is really something.

I cannot take any more lectures on the bipartisan nature of the Intelligence bill because it was referred at the same time to the Intelligence Committee and to the Judiciary Committee. That is the way it is sometimes around here. There are joint referrals.

Now, I admire people who have had us take a close look at what is going on with spying in this country, OK? Senator FEINGOLD and Senator DODD are the leading advocates of taking a look at this bill. Are they saying we are not going to have a bill? No, they are not saying that, but they are saying it needs to be improved. So, yes, it came out of the Intelligence Committee on a bipartisan basis, and that is good, but the Judiciary Committee wanted to put their stamp on it, and they did, and big time. A number of the amendments that were offered today and will be offered whenever we have the ability to go back to the bill are measures that came from the Judiciary Committee.

We want to work to get things done, but we don't need excuses such as: We need to read the proposal—30 hours to read the proposal, and in the meantime we are doing nothing.

Last week, I repeat, we had a lot of we could have done. We were prevented from doing that while this very difficult agreement was reached on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Mr. President, let me just say this: People around here in the Senate, in the country, know me by now. I pretty much call things the way I see them. Sometimes I need to step back a little bit and look at how I see them.

I want to say to my friend, my friend from Kentucky, the word "shallow" was improperly descriptive. So I will have that stricken from the record and insert therein—let's see, what word? Something that I didn't agree with, OK?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend, the majority leader. It is, it seems to me, possible to have a civil and spirited debate without violating rule XIX, and I appreciate his withdrawing that comment.

I see the Republican whip is here on the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader has the floor.

Mr. MCCONNELL. It looks as if I may lose the floor, so I wonder if the Senator from Arizona has a question.

Mr. KYL. I do have a question. This is why I am trying to get the attention of the minority leader just a moment ago.

I am on the Finance Committee, and I am very familiar with the Finance Committee bill. Now, I am certain the majority leader did not mean to suggest that the proposal we were just handed is, in fact, a bill that passed the Finance Committee. It is more than that, is it not?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yes. It is my understanding—again, we just got it 15 minutes ago. In response to the question of the Republican whip, we are not sure what is in it, but our impression is that it may not be what came out of the Finance Committee last Thursday.

Mr. KYL. If I could ask just one more question, I just asked my staff. I haven't had a chance to read it yet. My staff has begun to look at it. I would simply represent what my staff said, which is the first thing they noticed is that there is an additional \$1 billion—\$1 billion in spending on a program called LIHEAP. Is the minority leader aware of that yet?

Mr. MCCONNELL. No, I didn't know because I haven't had a chance to look at it yet, but that would make it somewhat different from the Finance Committee bill, I gather.

Mr. KYL. It would, indeed.

The majority leader would like to comment.

Mr. REID. Yes. I said starting at 2 o'clock this afternoon and every chance I get that we added that, they didn't add it. I added it to the Finance Committee. I told the Republican staff, I told my friend this afternoon when we first—the first time we visited that LIHEAP had been added.

Mr. KYL. And there are some additional changes from the Finance Committee version as well; is that not true?

Mr. REID. Yes, there are some minor changes, but I say to my friend, who is a member of the Finance Committee, that we have made some changes, but they are very minor, other than the LIHEAP matter.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I am not sure who has the floor, Mr. President. Do I still have the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will be happy to yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I am happy to yield the floor as I see there are others who wish to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I have been trying to get to the floor since this morning—well, actually, since we came into session at 2 o'clock. We have had a very spirited debate about FISA, and now we have invoked cloture on the stimulus package just to begin this debate. I also want to add my voice of distress that we may be facing a slowdown here on the stimulus package.

We are in a recession in California. This isn't a recession "maybe"; this is a recession in California. There are several States that already have begun a recession, a real recession, including a contraction in jobs, and a housing crisis that has hit our State.

We can't wait. When the minority leader, the Republican leader, says: Oh, my goodness, LIHEAP was added to the package—of all people who understand this, it is the Presiding Officer. LIHEAP is a program that has been around for a very long time, and it is low-income energy assistance. To express shock that this would be added to a stimulus package or to say we need hours and hours of delay to study the impact of adding LIHEAP, it just strains credulity.

Would my leader like me to pause for a question?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate very much my friend yielding to me.

Lost in all this debate about spending is I would hope everyone would understand that we always knew the stimulus debate would not be completed until Wednesday. That is when the vote will take place, at the earliest, on the package that came from the Finance Committee. What is stunning to me is we will not be able to finish FISA prior to Wednesday. We could start on that tonight. We have a number of amendments. I wanted to vote on those tonight. Of course, all day tomorrow, we could finish FISA. We could finish it tomorrow.

I want to make sure the record is very clear that they can spend all the time they want reading this amendment, which, by the way, doesn't add anything to the bill other than what we have—what I said: It adds to it housing language from the House bill which everybody approves of, and it adds some money to pay for some IRS things but a little, tiny bit of money. Anybody who reads this could do it very quickly and simply.

Why can't we work on FISA tomorrow? What would be wrong with that?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, would the leader yield for a question?

Mrs. BOXER. I have the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. I am sorry. Would my friend from California yield for a question?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, so you can ask a question.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank the Senator. So if the minority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, came down and he would give consent, we could go ahead and debate on FISA and actually finish

it by tomorrow evening; is that correct?

Mr. REID. Yes. The reason it was so amazing to me, what I heard, is that postcloture people have 30 hours to basically stall for more time. I thought, why in the world wouldn't they let us finish FISA?

Now, everyone knows—and my Presidential candidates, when we had four and when we had two, have never missed an important vote. OBAMA and CLINTON will not miss this important vote we are going to have on the stimulus package, but I have to give them a day's notice to get here. With what is happening here—and that is why I had to hurry and call the vote before 6 o'clock, because the 30 hours runs out a couple of minutes before midnight tomorrow night. I have to file cloture tomorrow, which would be Tuesday, when we could have a cloture vote on the Senate stimulus package. What a waste of time.

So I say to my friend from New York, the answer is yes. The Republican leader only has to say: Well, let's go ahead and finish FISA, and we will decide what we are going to do after I read the amendment. If they decide that they are going to continue with the 30 hours running and they are not going to let us file cloture until tomorrow rather than tonight, they have that right.

Mr. SCHUMER. Would my friend from California yield so I might pose another question to the Democratic leader?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes, I will.

Mr. SCHUMER. So in other words—I just want to understand this, Mr. President—the FISA bill—which the President and many on that side said we should hurry up on, we should move quickly, it is important—is really what is at issue here. The whole debate about reading the stimulus bill, which we have heard from the minority leader and the minority whip, has no relevance for tomorrow, as the leader—our leader, the Democratic leader—has agreed we are not voting on it until Wednesday. But really the focus is on whether we could vote on FISA—this important bill which we need to get done quickly—and the minority is blocking that for no known reason.

Should the minority leader come to the floor within an hour and work it out and say that we could go forward on FISA, we could start voting on FISA tonight and tomorrow and perhaps finish it?

Mr. REID. We would finish it tomorrow. The only thing that might hold it up is there are a couple of Senators who might want to speak for awhile, but that is OK. We have a unanimous consent agreement that limits the number of amendments we are going to have on it, so we could finish it tomorrow for sure.

Mr. SCHUMER. Would my colleague yield for one final question?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. SCHUMER. I am a little confused. Does the majority leader have

any idea why the minority would want to be holding up FISA?

Mr. REID. I sure do, I say to my friend.

Mr. SCHUMER. What would that be?

Mr. REID. There have been books written on this—books written on this—how the President has circumvented the laws we pass to have his wiretapping, OK? Now, there is not a single Democratic Senator who doesn't want to get the bad guys. We want to be able to do wiretapping so we can listen in on some of their evil conversations. But the President, you see, based on his past and how we have been treated here, doesn't want this FISA bill to change in any manner except to give them retroactive immunity; that is, to say to the phone companies: All the things you have done, good, bad, or indifferent, the courts can't look at it civilly. They can't look at it civilly. So the President wants to have that out of the way so that he can wait until the last minute to not have all these amendments that Senator FEINGOLD, Senator DODD, Senator LEAHY, Senator FEINSTEIN, and others have offered to improve this legislation, to make it more in keeping with the Constitution. So, as I have indicated earlier, I say to my friend from New York, they want to wait until the last minute. So that whatever we do here, the House will have to accept.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague from California and the majority leader for that. Now it all becomes clear what the minority is doing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to say, while my leadership team is here, I have just gotten the 2 pages—actually, it is 1½ pages—of the additional language on LIHEAP. The rest was taken verbatim from the House bill, which the President supports.

Mr. REID. Has the Senator had time to read that yet?

Mrs. BOXER. I read it while the Senator talked with Senator SCHUMER.

This is LIHEAP, a program that has been around for decades. This is \$1 billion to help people pay for the expensive cost of heating their homes. As I look at my friend, Senator SANDERS, who is in the chair, what a champion of this program he is—to those in the Northeast in particular.

I have to take the minority leader at his word. He says the reason he is holding everything up, he doesn't want to do any work—or do anything—because he must study this bill. If he were here now—of course, he is now gone, but Senator KYL is here—I would say let's read this together. This is easy, almost as easy as "Jane and John took the dog for a walk." Yet, still, they come out here and are holding up the business of the Senate and the country.

Mr. President, I say to my leaders, look, we can argue about how many angels dance on the head of a pin, but 20 million seniors are waiting for this. They were left out of the President's and the House package.

I wish to say to my friend, Senator MCCONNELL—and he is not here right now—that this matters. When he says the deal has been cut, that the President agreed with the House, well, wait a minute, look at the Constitution. There is a Senate, there is a House, and there is a President. We work together. We work our will, they work theirs, and we get together and compromise.

Twenty million seniors were left out, and we are fixing that. What else? We are also fixing the fact that they left out 250,000 disabled veterans. So why are we holding up work on something as simple as that? The answer comes back in a very convoluted way. I just have to say to someone who represents a State that is in a recession—and I know the State of the Senator from Nevada is in a recession. Many States are in a recession.

The President said we should act and we are not acting; we are not acting on FISA. Again, to respond, Senator BOND and Senator ROCKEFELLER agree on how to fix the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Well, good for them. But guess what. The Senate has to debate that and work its will.

Some people think the phone companies should have immunity. Some of us other folks think that if you give them immunity, you will never find out who was spied on and how, why, and how long they were spied on. We feel strongly. Is the minority suggesting that because two Senators agree, the rest of us are “chopped liver,” as my mother would say?

This place is like “Alice in Wonderland.” Tonight, more than any other night, it is like “Alice in Wonderland.” You have a President who is scared about the economy. He is begging us to act on the stimulus package, and we have intelligent Senators stand up—and they are very smart—on the floor saying: Oh my goodness, you added LIHEAP, and now, we are sorry, we are holding everything up. And then they said maybe they won’t. I hope they will not.

While I support, with every fiber of my body, the Senate package, it is just the start of what we need to do. Until we start paying attention to the needs of the American people and end the war in Iraq, which is stealing our treasure, both in our young men and women in uniform and our money, we will never get where we need to get.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will my friend yield?

Mrs. BOXER. Yes.

Mr. REID. Did the Senator know that before the night is out, I am going to come to the floor and ask unanimous consent to be allowed to proceed, during the 30 hours they are going to try to use postclosure on the motion to proceed to the House-passed stimulus package—that during the 30 hours, we be able to proceed to work on the FISA amendments? Is the Senator aware that I am going to do that?

Mrs. BOXER. I am very glad the majority leader is going to do that be-

cause the President—not only is he pushing us to pass his version of the stimulus package—and he is worried about it; he is scaring the American people, saying if we don’t have FISA done, terrible things will happen. It is time to stop scaring the people and start protecting the people. That is what we want to do. So I am going to support the leader’s call to move to FISA.

I believe if we have a debate on the stimulus and we don’t talk about the biggest drain on our people—the Iraq war—we are missing the elephant in the room, because until we end this war once and for all and end this failed policy in Iraq, we are simply going to be dragged down further and further into an abyss, where we don’t have the funds we need for the rest of the things we do, where our military is being stretched, and where we have no way out.

We actually have Republican candidates who are running for President saying we might be in Iraq for a hundred years. I have been around politics a long time—not quite a hundred years but for my adult lifetime. I have served with four Presidents from both parties. What an honor to have served with all of them. But I have never, ever worked with a President who didn’t have a clue as to how to end a war he got us into—not a clue. I have never seen a President who hasn’t given us some idea of how a war will end. So we need to remove this weight from around our necks. If we don’t, my future, your future, the future of our kids and grandkids is not going to be what it ought to be.

We are spending \$10 billion a month in Iraq. That is \$2.5 billion a week and \$357 million a day in Iraq. And the President and my Republican colleagues say we cannot afford to extend the stimulus package to include seniors and disabled veterans? Well, for the price of 1 month in Iraq, we can provide rebates to 20 million seniors who need it the most. Let me say that again. For the price of 1 month in Iraq, we can provide rebates to 20 million seniors who need it the most.

I hope the senior citizens within the sound of my voice have already contacted us to tell us to cover them in this recovery package. They are the ones who really need it the most because they are living on a fixed income and they are struggling. Some of them have to cut their pills in half every day they have to take them to stay alive so they can stretch their medicine.

Well, the President and my Republican colleagues say we cannot afford to extend the stimulus package to include disabled veterans. That is why we have these charts made up here: 250,000 disabled veterans. I hope they are also calling. These are the folks who should be honored, loved, appreciated, but not just with words but by deeds.

Mr. President, I will tell you, for less than the cost of 1 day in Iraq, we can provide rebates to 250,000 disabled vet-

erans—1 day in Iraq. We can take care of our veterans.

That is why we don’t know why this stalling is going on. What about our kids? For less than the cost of 3 months in Iraq, we can enroll every eligible child in the Head Start Program and give them the start they deserve. For the cost of 2 weeks in Iraq, we can provide health insurance for 6 million uninsured children in the United States for a year. The list goes on and on.

Last year, in the name of budget austerity, the President vetoed children’s health care. But he has an open checkbook for Iraq. He puts it straight on the debt. He vetoed critical investments in our infrastructure.

Mr. President, the occupant of the chair helped me when we worked together on the Environment Committee with Senator INHOFE. We overrode a veto because the President said: Sorry, we are rebuilding in Iraq. But we cannot afford to fix our infrastructure here in America. The President vetoed education spending and health research.

I don’t know about my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, but when I talk to families, they are very scared now about a lot of things. One of those things is, is someone getting cancer or getting Alzheimer’s, or is a child getting autism, and there are a lot of other fears. They are real fears because they hit millions of our families. But the President vetoed the bill that had that health research money in it. We were forced to cut back.

So where are we now? We are spending money we don’t have in Iraq. Remember when Budget Director Mitch Daniels said the war would cost no more than \$60 billion? Paul Wolfowitz assured us that with Iraqi oil revenue, the war would pay for itself. Some people said the war might cost \$200 billion, and they were ridiculed as vastly overstating the costs. Well, the President’s most recent stimulus package is almost that.

The President has spent more than half a trillion dollars on his failed policy. There is no end in sight. It is shorting the funds we need to rebuild our own country—and it is borrowed money. It needs to stop. We are hemorrhaging taxpayer money in Iraq, and the wake is beyond disgraceful. For a base in Iraq that was never built, we paid a contractor \$72 million. We paid them to build a barracks for the police academy in Baghdad, and instead we got a building with “giant cracks snaking through newly built walls and human waste dripping from the ceiling.”

The administration loaded \$9 billion in cash onto pallets and shipped it to Iraq, where it simply disappeared. And we cannot take care of 250,000 disabled veterans or 20 million seniors, and we cut spending to find a cure for diseases that ail our people. We cut funding from afterschool programs when our kids desperately need to have a place to go after school.



Mr. President, the Republicans are stalling because these facts, when we have these debates, are coming to light. So they are stalling. Can you imagine what would happen if \$9 billion disappeared from a Federal grant in Vermont or California or Minnesota or New Jersey or Ohio? The people responsible would go to prison. But in Iraq, the President shrugged it off.

The President said we lack fiscal discipline. Yet, look what he has done to this budget. He took a surplus and turned it into a massive deficit, and he took a debt we were paying down and it exploded on his watch.

For him to say we are not fiscally responsible because we want to invest in our people, we want to invest in our infrastructure, we want to find cures for disease, and, yes, we want to invest in alternative energy so we don't have to be dependent on foreign oil and we can clean our air of the carbon dioxide that is warming the planet—fiscal irresponsibility? That is the name of the game with this administration, whether it is the missing billions or the bases that were never built or this enormous embassy that is being built in Baghdad. It is nothing short of breathtaking. The President and his supporters shrug their shoulders, and yet we cannot get to the stimulus package because somebody said they don't understand we have added \$1 billion, 1½ pages to the bill to help poor people pay for energy. They have to be kidding. That is a stall.

The checkbook is open for Iraq; it is closed for America. This President wouldn't even be doing what he is doing now unless he is scared this recession is hitting.

Let me tell you what else we added to this stimulus bill that is being held up. We took the House language as it pertained to the housing crisis, and we increased the amounts that Freddie and Fannie and FHA can lend our homeowners to give them the chance to refinance these mortgages to keep responsible homeowners in their homes. We cannot wait on this provision. We can't wait on it. Thousands and thousands of cities are witnessing these foreclosures.

What happens when a home forecloses? The pool might go. The new owner of the home ignores keeping up the property, and it is a danger to have a pool that has not been attended to. Mosquitoes breed in the pool and the whole lawn gets all brown and the values go down and suddenly you have a downward spiral. We have to turn it around. But somebody has to hold up a bill because they have to read 1½ pages about LIHEAP, a program that has been around for decades and, by the way, supported on both sides of the aisle.

The toll this Iraq war is having on our Armed Forces is stretching our military to the breaking point. Recently, we learned with sadness in our hearts that suicide attempts among U.S. troops have reached a record high,

a sixfold increase since 2002. Last year, the Washington Post reported there was a readiness death spiral, that is their term, that senior officers warn puts our Nation at risk because we lack the strategic reserve of ground forces to respond to potential crises throughout the world.

We are borrowing billions, putting that cost on the backs of our kids and grandkids, shorting our ability to take care of the people who need us now that the economy is in a downturn, and that hurts our security.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. BOXER. As soon as I finish my statement, I will be happy to yield.

We have to ask this President: Why are we in Iraq? The answer depends on when he was asked. Once upon a time, we were told it was about weapons of mass destruction. Remember? We had to go find them. Our military found there were none. Then we were told it was Saddam's ties to al-Qaida. Well, there was no connection to al-Qaida. Then we were told we had to get Saddam's family and show their pictures to the world so the world knew America meant business. And we did that, and the fighting went on. Then we were told they need to have an election, and how proud we were when the Iraqi people went and as a free people elected their leaders.

All that happened. The President said: Mission accomplished. But it goes on and on because it is a changing mission every day, no vision of how to get out of this situation, and we have colleagues on the other side talking about us being there 50 years, 100 years, who knows, maybe 1,000 years. This is not at no cost or little cost. It is costing us an absolute fortune, and it is tied to this deficit because it is tying our hands.

The President says our commitment to Iraq is not open ended, and yet he will not tell the leaders over there: Get your act together because we have trained 500,000 of you and now it is your turn to stand up and fight for your freedom and fight for your democracy, frankly, the way we did and other countries do.

There is a point in time when you have given so much blood and treasure that you have to say: We want to help you, we will be there, but we will not be in the forefront of this fight.

We have never been leveled with. How many more brave men and women will die? Oh, we don't know. How many more will be wounded? We don't know. But what we do know is some of the wounded are coming home to my State and they are suffering, suffering, suffering. Yet in the President's stimulus package, there is no help for disabled veterans. No, oh, no, we couldn't do that. For a day of the cost of Iraq we can help them. That is why we want the debate and we want the debate to start.

The President says the surge will lead us to victory. We hope so, but the

President says he knows it. How long will the surge last? It was supposed to provide a quiet time for the leaders to resolve their problems. It hasn't happened.

Our brave men and women in uniform have performed remarkably. They have done every single thing we have asked of them and more. But you know what, there has to be an end to this. As our military leaders tell us every day, there is no military solution to the situation in Iraq.

I said before we trained 500,000 Iraqis. I want to correct that figure. It is 440,000. That is how many Iraqis we have trained. Our taxpayers have laid the money out to train.

I think we ought to look at what the British did. The British were very clear. They said their presence in Iraq was fueling the violence, fueling al-Qaida, and it would be far better if they played a supportive role. And most of them will be gone. As a matter of fact, the coalition of the willing has been massively depleted.

There is a beginning, a middle, and an end to a mission. But you cannot change the mission every few months. It is not fair to our troops. It is sending a mixed message to the Iraqis.

Why do I bring this all up in the context of the stimulus? Because the outflow of money is hurting us. We cannot take care of America. I think we need to make a choice, and this stimulus package is the time for us to connect all the dots. This economic recession needs our attention. We need to put the resources to it so it doesn't become a deep and darker recession. We have to ask ourselves in the context of this debate: Is it time for America, for our families, for our soldiers coming home, for our children, or is it the time to continue an open-ended commitment to a war without an end, a price tag without an end, a war that is tying our hands as this recession becomes more real day after day?

Clearly, it is no surprise that I say it is time for America and it is time for change. I do believe the people out there, whether they are Democrats, Republicans or Independents, are crying out for that change.

I will also say, they may not all agree on one particular path, but one thing they want us to do is our job. They don't want stall tactics, they don't want delays, they don't want brilliant Senators coming to the floor and saying: Gee, there has been a change in this bill, and we need 30 hours to figure it out. Stay up until 10 or 11; you can read that part of the bill. It isn't complicated, and it isn't time to continue an open-ended commitment to a war without end.

As we try to soften the blow of this recession on the American people, let us understand that if we don't change when it comes to this war and start bringing our troops home and start giving the Iraqi leaders a signal that they need to take charge of their own country, I will tell you, I can't be part of

that kind of a value system because our people are suffering.

Again, my State is in a recession. I have sitting councilmen coming to me—by the way, not always in my party, believe me—saying to me: Senator, you have to help us. We are in a spiral. Help us. When I called and said help is on the way, we are going to raise those loan limits for Fannie, Freddie, and FHA, we are going to give the homebuilders some kind of a tax break, we are going to give a tax break to the alternative energy industry so they can start hiring people, they smiled, there is hope. But if they heard tonight the back and forth between the Democratic leader and the Republican leader and they heard the Republican leader say: We are really sorry we are going to hold things up because I have to read this bill when, in fact, the changes that were made are so minuscule we could read it in 10 minutes, they don't know what is going on, and they throw up their hands.

I am here tonight to tell them: Don't give up hope because we are motivated. We are motivated to get this package through. We are telling our seniors to let their Senators know, Democratic and Republican Senators, they need to be included, the disabled veterans, the homebuilders, the people who are struggling with their mortgages. We are on your side. If your voice is heard, even in this Senate, it will have an impact.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I think the Senator from California makes a compelling case to take up the stimulus package right away. The bill, by the way, is a 71-page bill. I do think we need a little opportunity to read through it. If, as the Senator says, there are only two or three changes to it, I am tempted to ask unanimous consent that we vote on that package tomorrow. The reason I will not is because I owe it to the majority leader to advise him in advance of making such a request, and I know what his response will be. His response, I believe, will be he has made a commitment to Senators who are campaigning for the Presidency that they will not have to come back tomorrow to vote. That is why we are not voting tomorrow. It is not that Republicans are trying to hold up things.

Yes, the minority leader made the point that since we just received the bill, we would like an opportunity to read it. I will get back to that in a moment. But the reality is, as the distinguished Senator from California said, why are we holding up work on this stimulus bill? We are not. As I said, I will be happy to move to vote on it tomorrow.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. KYL. I will yield to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Now I am confused, truly, honestly. I thought Senator

McCONNELL said, after you informed him there were changes to the bill, that he was very concerned about that and he needed time to read the bill. That is what I heard both of you talk about. You came down and told him that. I heard that.

Then I heard Senator REID say: While you are reading this bill, let's get done with FISA. We can't seem to get that done. But it was my friend, Senator KYL, and my friend, Senator McCONNELL, who said very clearly they needed time to read this bill. I pointed out that the bill—

Mr. KYL. So what is your question? What is the question?

Mrs. BOXER. My question is, if you want to go to it right now, why did you tell the majority leader that there were changes to it and you needed to read and take all 30 hours to read the bill? I don't understand.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the answer to the question, which is, Why don't we go to the stimulus bill? Why do we need 30 hours to read it, is, as I said, I would be happy to propound a unanimous consent request right now that we go to the stimulus bill and vote on it tomorrow. I will not do that because I know what the majority leader would say, which is, no, I will object to going to a vote on the stimulus bill tomorrow because I have told our Senate colleagues who are running for President and some others who are campaigning for them that we are not going to vote on it tomorrow. We are not going to have a vote on that, which they would miss, because it is too important. That is what he said a moment ago.

I said I would come back to the point of reading the bill, and I do want to get back to that because I do think we should read bills before we vote on them. But the key point here is that Republicans are not holding up action on this stimulus package. And for anybody on the Senate floor to suggest that we are, it is simply not the case. We voted overwhelmingly to grant cloture so we could take up the bill. I think all of the Democratic Senators voted to take up the bill. So we are on the bill. We are on the stimulus bill. But we can't vote on it because there has been a commitment to Senators who are running for the Presidency and some others that we won't vote on it tomorrow. Now, we didn't make that commitment. That commitment, I understand, was made by the distinguished majority leader. That is why I am not going to ask unanimous consent to try to embarrass people on the other side.

Let me get to the matter of reading the bill.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question? It is so confusing to me.

Mr. KYL. Well, Mr. President, I am sorry the Senator is confused, but let me continue on to make the point the Senator wanted to talk about, which is why we need to read the bill.

The bill was just handed to me by staff. I have not yet read it. It is 71

pages. Here it is. It starts out "Strike all after the first word and insert the following." Well, if we are striking all after the first word, then I want to know what we are inserting. Now, the representation from Senators on the other side is that we have added \$1 billion in spending on LIHEAP. There is a representation that in the bill there is an increase in the amount of mortgages that can be refinanced, and it was represented that is the same as in the House package. If that is the case, that takes the amount—I believe it is over \$700,000.

I don't know a lot of low-income Americans who have mortgages of over \$700,000 or mortgages up to \$700,000. But as I understand it, if that is what the House bill provides for, and if that has been added to this bill, then that is what that provision would be. And the majority leader said there were some other small changes. I am not exactly sure what they are. It may be as simple as Dick and Jane, as the Senator from California said, in which case, as I said, perhaps we can go to it tomorrow. But, again, I don't think that is what the majority leader wants to do because of the commitments he has made to Senators who would have to come back here for a vote on it.

What is at work here is not that we are holding up action on the stimulus bill. What is at work here is a desire to move forward with votes on the FISA bill, which we are not on. We all voted to go to the stimulus bill, including all the members of the Democratic majority. If Members of the Democratic majority want to go on the stimulus bill, then let us consider the stimulus bill. If now the request is we just got on this, but now we want to go back to the FISA package, I wonder what it is about collecting intelligence on terrorists that is somehow less important than the stimulus bill so we can have the Senators vote on that but we can't have them vote on the stimulus package. These are both big important issues.

I don't want to come down here and engage in this tit for tat. I frankly think the American people are tired of it. They see all this bickering and they wonder why we can't get business done, why we can't get to solving these critical problems.

The Senator from California has made an eloquent plea for why we need to get out of Iraq, but we hear language like "breathtaking irresponsibility" and "never worked with a President that didn't have a clue"—meaning this President doesn't have a clue—about how to end the Iraq war. An earlier speaker said: The President wants to spy in violation of the Constitution.

Now, look, you can disagree with the President, but he doesn't want to spy in violation of the Constitution. He wants to collect intelligence on our enemies consistent with the Constitution. We can have legitimate debate and disagreement about whether what



we have done is constitutional. Some people might say no; others would say it is constitutional. But I do know this: Six months ago this body overwhelmingly—there may have been only one negative vote, I am not positive of that, but overwhelmingly—in a bipartisan vote we agreed to allow the collection of foreign intelligence under a particular regime for doing that, and it is that method of collection we want to reauthorize and we want to continue.

It is not just two Senators who decided to get together to develop a bill. By a bipartisan vote of 13 to 2 the Intelligence Committee agreed on the reauthorization and the method by which we have been collecting intelligence on our enemies for the last 6 months. Now, if we have been doing it for the last 6 months, and the Intelligence Committee by this bipartisan majority said let's keep on doing that, virtually no other changes except in one area dealing with liability protection for the communications companies, then I don't think it is fair to say this has all been done unconstitutionally. That would mean the majority, almost all Democrats, agreed to allow intelligence collection that was unconstitutional. That certainly isn't what my colleagues intended, what I intended, or what anybody else in this body intended.

So let us not say the President wants to collect intelligence that is unconstitutional and that is what we have been doing under a Senate and House-passed bill for the last 6 months. That is the kind of irresponsible debate the American people, quite frankly, are tired of.

The basic question that is before us tonight is, Shall we pass a bill that the majority leader has laid down dealing with stimulating the economy? We all just voted—virtually all of us voted—to take up the stimulus bill. We had hoped we would actually have this 3 or 4 days ago, but now we have it, and the majority leader has the absolute right to substitute what he wants us to consider, and he has done that. This is his proposal. And we have received some assurances as to what is and what isn't in it. I think we trust, but we also want to verify. As I said, it is 71 pages, but it shouldn't take that long for us to figure out whether there are other things in here other than what has been represented to us. If in fact it turns out that is the case, that all we have done is add another \$1 billion in spending on the LIHEAP program, we have increased the amount of mortgages that can be refinanced up to 700 some thousand dollars—I think that is the number; I will read it here to make sure—and then some other minor changes, whatever those are, then, again, I would be perfectly happy to take up this bill tomorrow.

If I wanted to score cheap political points, I would do the same thing some on the other side have talked about, which is to say: All right, I ask unanimous consent that we take this up and vote on it. But I know there are people

out campaigning. I know the majority leader has given them assurances they wouldn't have to come back for a vote on it. I respect that. It is a perfectly reasonable request. We can be taking the time now not just to ensure what is in the bill but to debate the bill, so that when we do vote on it, presumably the next day, we would have had our complete debate. It is not a waste of the American people's time for the Senate to take 1 day to debate a bill this important.

We don't have to be disagreeable about this. We can assure ourselves of what is in it and we can take tomorrow to debate it. A lot of the candidates are gone—presumably we don't want to ask them to come back to vote on it—so then we can vote on it the following day, and then take up the FISA bill, which is equally important, if not more important in terms of foreign intelligence collection. We have, what, another week or 10 days to complete work on that, with plenty of time to do it.

I think we should take a step back, not play political games here with the dueling unanimous consent requests to do something that does nothing but embarrass the other side. Let us get to the business of the American people, let us get a stimulus package voted on, let us then turn to the FISA bill and get the amendments voted on and pass that to the President before we take the work period off that we will be taking off in, what, 12 days or so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate the constructive comments by my friend from my sister State of Arizona. As I understood what he said, he suggests we debate the stimulus package tomorrow and have a time certain to vote on the proposal that came from the Senate Finance Committee and do that all on Wednesday. Is that what my friend is saying?

Mr. KYL. I am very sorry. I apologize.

Mr. REID. No problem, I will repeat it. My understanding of what my friend from Arizona said is that you think we should debate the stimulus package tomorrow and have a time certain to vote on the Senate Finance Committee package on Wednesday.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I said it was my own personal view that we would not be wasting the American people's time to have a debate on the stimulus package and to have a vote on it on Wednesday. Obviously, I am not speaking for any of my other colleagues, and we would obviously have to do that, but if the leader is concerned about not having people come back for votes tomorrow, which is a perfectly reasonable concern, given the importance of tomorrow on both sides—there are Senators who are out campaigning, and I understand that is a very important proposition—then I think it is appropriate to wait until Wednesday to have a vote on the stimulus package.

Mr. REID. We only have three Senators out campaigning, MCCAIN, CLIN-

TON, and OBAMA, and it was my suggestion that tomorrow, if the Republicans don't want votes, then shouldn't we at least have the ability to see if we can complete the offering of amendments on the FISA legislation? We can intersperse that with people who want to talk about the stimulus. They can do that.

I am happy to set a time certain on Wednesday so MCCAIN, OBAMA, and CLINTON know when to come back on Wednesday. I am happy to do that.

I understand my friend is saying that he is speaking for himself, and I appreciate that, but he is the second ranking Republican leader in the Senate. What I would suggest, Mr. President, is that he talk to whomever he needs to speak with—I am sure the Republican leader—to see if what he suggests is doable, and we will get that worked out tonight. And that is tomorrow we can come in, people can talk about the stimulus package all they want, and set a time certain on Wednesday to vote. That would save me having to file cloture on it either tonight or tomorrow night, which will happen. If I file it tomorrow night, the vote will have to be on Thursday. In the meantime, we have to wipe out a lot of time.

I think it is very important we get FISA done. The end is near on FISA. We have worked out an agreement to finish that bill.

So I say to my friend, if I came and offered a consent agreement in keeping with what your suggestion is, do you think you could get it approved tonight?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, obviously, our colleagues are not here. I would not object to that kind of agreement. I don't know what others would do.

To be fair, did I represent the distinguished majority leader correctly, that you had assured Senators they would not be voting on the stimulus package tomorrow?

Mr. REID. Yes, I have said, starting at 2 p.m. today—I might even have said it last week—that I have two Senators, OBAMA and CLINTON, whom I would try to give at least 1 day's notice when a vote was to occur. That is why it is important to me, and I would think it would be important to Senator MCCAIN also, that we have a time certain on Wednesday to tell them when they have to be here. If we can't do it by agreement, then the only thing I can do, if the Republicans are going to waste all the time on 30 hours postcloture, I will have to, before midnight tomorrow, file cloture so we can have a Thursday cloture vote.

Mr. KYL. If I can respond, obviously, the majority leader knows I can't make that agreement here on the floor, but I will pass that on to the minority leader and consult with our colleagues and see what can be agreed to in terms of an agreement.

I think the majority leader is exactly correct. As a matter of courtesy to Members on both sides, it is probably

not the best idea to have votes tomorrow. It is an historic day in American history.

Mr. REID. If I can interrupt my friend, on FISA, I think we can easily have votes tomorrow. There would be no problem with that, because those votes, most of them, aren't going to be that close anyway. I think we need to work through that. I have told all my Senators we would do our best to try to have votes on FISA tomorrow.

Now, maybe this has been in the works for a long time, because one of my Senators told me she was coming over and one of the reporters said: No votes tomorrow, right? She said: What are you talking about? They said: Senator MCCONNELL has told his Senators there will be no votes on Tuesday.

So maybe this has been in the works for some time, that there would be no votes on Tuesday. But we may have a couple anyway, to make sure we have some. I do have that ability, to have votes. It may not be much on substance, but it will be votes, and it will be counted on Senators' voting records.

Mr. KYL. If I can interrupt, I don't think Senator MCCONNELL said that. And you can have votes tomorrow. I think our Members would be perfectly fine on any votes you want to call.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate the constructive tone of my friend's statement, and either I or Senator DURBIN will tonight sometime offer a consent agreement so we can have a pathway to whatever we are going to do in the next couple of days.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2248

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following morning business Tuesday, February 5, the Senate resume the FISA legislation, then proceed to a vote in relation to the four amendments that were debated today, with 2 minutes between each vote equally divided, and that on the disposition of those amendments, the Senate continue to consider amendments in order to the FISA legislation and that all time consumed during that debate count postcloture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, for the reasons I expressed with the majority leader a moment ago in our colloquy, I must object at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I understand that. I was not making an offer to put my colleague on the spot but merely putting on the RECORD, because I think the American people sense what is happening in Congress and Capitol Hill and the Senate.

I have been out watching the Presidential debates, both the formal ones and the presentations made by candidates. Change is the biggest word of this election cycle on both sides. I think it is evident the American people feel America is headed in the wrong di-

rection by overwhelming numbers. When they look at Congress and Washington, they do not sense that we are sensitive to the real challenges families face every day. They listen, some of them do, particularly those suffering from insomnia, watch and listen to C-SPAN and wonder why, why all the quorum calls in the Senate? Why all the time wasted? Why not more votes on bills? If you are here in Washington, why not earn your keep?

Sometimes I wonder if this would be a better institution if Senators were paid by the production of this Chamber because certainly this week we are not likely to earn much pay. Last year, the Republican minority, and it was their right under Senate rules, were responsible for 62 or 64 filibusters.

A filibuster is an attempt to continue debate indefinitely rather than reach a conclusion and a vote. Sixty-four filibusters made an all-time record in the Senate for 1 year. Sixty-four times the Republicans said: Whatever you are doing, let it go on forever, let's not bring it to an end.

And that, unfortunately, meant many important issues were not voted on, were not decided. That is their right, the minority's right. It is the nature of the Senate to slow things down. But I think the Republican minority in this circumstance has taken it to an extreme.

I think it is this extreme that has led to the frustration across America as they try to witness what is going on in the Senate and wonder why more is not accomplished.

Well, what we have tried to do today, unsuccessfully, is to ask permission from the Republicans to make tomorrow a productive day, to make tomorrow a day when we can either debate the stimulus package, preparing for a vote on Wednesday, or consider amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act so we can move that bill toward passage; in other words, let's not waste a day. Let's not turn the lights on and bring all the staff out, turn on the television cameras and stand here before the microphones and say nothing and do nothing.

But the Republican position is to insist we do nothing tomorrow. Nothing. I made a request that we go to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Now, this is the law the President is asking for, in fact demanding, on a timely basis. The President is saying: I need this authority to keep America safe. It took us a long time to work out an agreement on amendments. I am sure fingers can be pointed to both sides. But we reached the agreement on how many amendments, how many votes will be necessary.

Now I have made a request that we go to that bill tomorrow, let's not waste tomorrow, let's move on this important domestic security issue. Let's have our debate, let's have our amendments, let's move forward, let's get it done, let's put in a good day's work. And the Senator from Arizona, on behalf of his leadership, has objected.

It means tomorrow we will gather, we will bring in the Chaplain, he will say an inspiring prayer, we will say the Pledge of Allegiance, then we will figure out how to kill a day. That is what will happen.

We will fill the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, there will be some interesting speeches, no amendments will be considered and voted on, no debate on the economic stimulus package, it will be a wasted day.

Can America, can the Senate afford a wasted day? We are in the midst of, or at least close to a recession, if not there. A lot of people are worried about it. People back in Illinois whom I represent are concerned about what is happening to our economy. We have a lot of folks with 401(k)s and IRAs and pension plans who look at the stock market on a daily basis and worry about their life savings and their retirement, as they should.

People are concerned if we slide into a recession there will be even more unemployment than was reported last week, on Friday, when we had sobering figures about the thousands of Americans who were out of work.

The President has expressed alarm about the state of the economy. All these things argue for us to move forward and do something. We can start doing something tomorrow. We can have a legitimate, substantive debate on the economic stimulus package and a vote on Wednesday. Now, would that not be historic, that the Senate would actually get an important measure out of the way in a matter of a few days? What is the difference between the Republicans and the Democrats at this moment on the economic stimulus package? I am not sure anymore. You see, the President's original position with the House, Democrats and Republicans, suggested we would be sending checks for \$600 or \$1,200 for a family, to individuals, to try to stimulate the economy and extra money for children if there are children in the family.

That is a good start. It is a start that we built on in the Senate Finance Committee on a bipartisan basis. In the Senate Finance Committee we said: Beyond those individuals covered by the House, we think 20 million seniors should receive this kind of rebate check as well. They will spend that money, many of them on fixed incomes, and stimulate the economy. Let us, in fairness, give them a helping hand.

I am not sure, as I stand here, whether the Republicans in the Senate are supporting this. Only three Republicans in the Senate Finance Committee voted for it. But what is at stake in our vote on the economic stimulus package is whether 20 million seniors in America will be included in the rebate checks. That is a pretty straightforward vote. You either think they should be or they should not be included. The Democrats think they should be included.

In addition, some 250,000 disabled veterans who receive compensation from

our Government for their disabilities for their wounds, we too believe they should receive a rebate. Some say they already get a check. That is true. But if any group deserves an extra helping hand, it is those who stood up and fought for this country and risked their lives for America.

I certainly believe 250,000 disabled veterans should be included in the economic stimulus package. I do not know if the Republicans now support that. As I said, three, only three in the Senate Finance Committee would vote for that.

We also have a provision which says that if you are unemployed, receiving unemployment compensation, we will extend your unemployment compensation benefits for a matter of 13 weeks. And if your State is hard hit by unemployment, 26 weeks. Most economists will tell you that is the easiest and quickest way to stimulate the economy, people who are unemployed are scraping by.

Every dollar received is spent to keep things together while they look for a job. Well, we think that group, which has historically been part of any economic recovery package, should be part of this package as well. Now, some of the Republicans object to it. They have said so publicly. They have a curious notion that if you give people 13 weeks of unemployment benefits, they will then decide to pull out the motor home and go on vacation and stop looking for work. I wonder if these same Republicans have taken a look at how much these people are paid. You know, it is not a princely sum. In many cases it is \$500 a week, \$500 a week for someone who has had a good job is not going to be enough to get by. Trying to survive for 3 months or 6 months on that could be extremely challenging. I think it is only right and just and fair and moral for us to say to unemployed families: Here is a little extra help so you can get by as we push toward and try to avoid a recession.

Some Republicans disagree. So perhaps that is the reason why they oppose the Senate Finance Committee package. There are other provisions there. You can argue them up or down. Should we have a provision, as the Presiding Officer from Vermont has asked for, to extend LIHEAP. This is the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program. It is a way to help people pay utility bills who otherwise cannot afford to do it.

The Senator from Vermont who is presiding has been one of our leading spokesmen for that. Interestingly enough, as Senator BOXER from California mentioned earlier, the Republican leader said that was one of the reasons we could not take up the economic stimulus package, he had to read the provisions on LIHEAP because they are the only major change in this bill.

Those provisions take all of a page and three lines. I think any Senator could get through that without a lot of

strain. You do not have to be a speed reader to understand exactly what it says.

So here we are again, as we were last year 64 times, the Republican minority doing everything they can to slow down the Senate, to stop us from considering important legislation, so at some later date they can complain that we have not accomplished enough. Well, you cannot have it both ways. You cannot object when we try to move to the FISA legislation and consider amendments and then say later we are not moving quickly or on a high priority.

You cannot object to an economic stimulus vote on Wednesday, as we try to schedule it and then object that the Senate Democratic leadership is not responsive to America's economy. We are going to do the best we can under the Senate rules. We are going to, unfortunately, kill a lot of time because of this Republican approach. It is their right under the rules. I do not question it. But I do question the wisdom of allowing this Senate to continue to move so slowly, to be so unresponsive, to spend so many wasted hours and wasted days for no earthly purpose.

It would be far better for those of us who were drawing a paycheck around here to roll up our sleeves and go to work, be accommodating to schedules as we must be, but for goodness sakes, would it hurt us tomorrow to take up these amendments to the FISA bill, to debate them and vote on them?

I think it would be a good, healthy thing. It almost would bring the Senate perilously close to being a deliberative body again, which we do not do enough of. I hope the Senate leadership on the Republican side will reconsider their position, will stop objecting to considering substantive amendments to important legislation that we ought to move as quickly as possible.

I will make a comment that I think most Members are aware of, but there will be no further votes today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. I know the Senator from New Jersey wants to speak, but since some of this was directed to my comments on the unanimous consent request, I think I should take a couple of minutes to respond.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. If I may have the courtesy of a question to the Senator from Arizona. My subject is away from the present discussion. Short subject. It talks about the pride we in New Jersey have about our Giants. But if I might have a few minutes?

Mr. KYL. Since we have had this discussion, let me take no more than 4 minutes. I will join the Senator in the pride he has for the Giants and their wonderful victory in my home State of Arizona yesterday. I hope a good time was had by all, including those who had their string broken.

I do wish to respond because there have been a couple suggestions made I think that are inaccurate. We are not

going to come in tomorrow and have the prayer by the Chaplain and do nothing.

I hope that debate on the stimulus package is not perceived by people as doing nothing. All of us, almost all of us I think, everybody on the Democratic side voted to take up the stimulus bill. That is what we voted on an hour ago. We voted to take up the stimulus bill. Now we are on the stimulus bill.

I have not had a chance to speak on it yet. I would like to do that. Tomorrow is my opportunity. The majority leader is the one who said there would be no votes on the stimulus package tomorrow, not the Senator from Kentucky, the minority leader.

So the fact that we are not voting on the stimulus bill tomorrow has nothing to do with Republican delay. It is a commitment made by the majority leader. I have no problem with the commitment. There are people out campaigning. But that was the majority leader's decision not to vote on the stimulus bill tomorrow.

As I said, we voted for cloture for the House bill. I am happy to vote on the House bill. I do not know whether my other colleagues are going to be done debating this in 1 day tomorrow. But I do know this, we have gone to the stimulus package. We are going to be on it tomorrow. That is what we all agreed to do.

Now the assistant leader comes down and asks unanimous consent to go off the bill we voted to go on and to start voting tomorrow on some FISA amendments, some amendments to the FISA bill. He said: What a waste it would be.

Now, as everyone in this body knows, we did not vote last Wednesday, last Thursday, last Friday, not because Republican's were not ready to vote, there was no agreement on how to proceed to a FISA bill.

We have now reached that agreement. That agreement is in place. The minute we finish this stimulus package, we will move to the FISA bill. We can get that done within the next 10 days. There is no question about that. So I do not know why this constant attempt to try to put people on record, as the distinguished assistant leader said, and then to talk about 64 filibusters by Republicans.

The majority leader set a record last year in the number of cloture votes that were required in order for us to do business. When the majority leader brings up a bill and then precludes any other amendments and files cloture, we have no choice but to vote on that cloture motion. If we vote against it, it is called a filibuster. That is not a filibuster. But by the reckoning of the other side, I gather that is how they count up the number of filibusters.

Every time we vote against a cloture vote, the majority leader has required—and there is no opportunity for Republican amendments—many of those times Republicans are going to say: No, we want a chance to offer

some amendments. That is not a filibuster. Yet that is the kind of accusation that has been made here.

I want to get back to the point that surely we can have a constructive debate without constantly trying to cut each other off at the knees; that the Republican minority has taken this to an extreme, that they are not sensitive to the challenges the people face, that the Republican position is to do nothing tomorrow.

Well, we are all going to debate the stimulus package tomorrow because we all voted to debate the stimulus package tomorrow. That is not doing nothing.

I ask my colleagues again: Let's quit this business of trying to put the other side into an embarrassing position to object to something or complain that we want to do nothing or we do not care about people or that the President wants to violate the Constitution. This is the kind of thing the American people are sick of.

We voted to take up the stimulus package. Let's take it up. We will have time to read it. If it is as simple as the other side says, that is great. It is 71 pages long. But if it is pretty simple, then presumably the debate will not take all that long. Then we can turn to the FISA bill, on which we have reached an agreement.

I hope my colleagues, in moving forward, will consider the interests of the American people first and stop this bickering to try to put each other into embarrassing positions so we gain a little bit of a political advantage.

Mr. President, I am very happy now to join my colleague from New Jersey in a bipartisan exercise; that is, to congratulate the New York Giants on their victory.

I am happy to yield the floor to him at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

(The remarks of Mr. LAUTENBERG are printed in today's RECORD under "Morning Business.")

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### WARRIOR CITIZENS CEREMONY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday I met American heroes—dozens and dozens of American heroes—citizen soldiers who had returned from service in Iraq. Out of Brooklyn, OH, High School near Cleveland, 81 soldiers in the 256th Combat Support Hospital were honored at the Warriors Citizens ceremony.

Many years ago—200 years or so ago—George Washington talked about farmers putting down their plows and serving their country. Yesterday I met

nurses, teachers, doctors, farmers, and small business owners, all of whom had returned from Iraq last October, and all of whom we were honoring yesterday in Brooklyn, OH. MAJ Michael Evarts trained Iraqi soldiers. MAJ Michael Evarts, a citizen soldier, returned to Ohio; he works every day supporting his family as a pharmaceutical representative.

Bryan Block from Zanesville left his restaurant for a year to serve his country. He left Charlie's Subs to his son-in-law in Zanesville and last October returned to a growing, prosperous restaurant. Bryan Block is a citizen soldier.

LTC Shirley Koachway spoke with an infectious enthusiasm and with an obvious dedication to the veterans she serves. Not only is she in the Army Reserve, but she told me about her work in Sandusky—a city just west of Loraine where I live—in a community-based outreach clinic serving veterans—a citizen soldier.

CPT Dionne Moore is an optometrist who works for the Department of Veterans' Affairs in a community-based outreach clinic in Loraine, OH. Captain Moore told me with some pain in her eyes how she is seeing more and more diabetic veterans who have not gotten their medicine or not often enough kept up with taking their medicine, which is causing a decreased use of their vision and an increase in blindness in all too many veterans.

CWO Ron Kuntz, who directed the choir for the ceremony, spoke passionately not just about his service for our country but spoke passionately about his students whom he has as a music teacher in the Cleveland city schools—another citizen soldier.

I also spoke with COL Ron Dziedzicki, who was a nurse and is now a hospital administrator who has been working with these men and women, with these soldiers in Europe and in Asia and all over the world in his many years—more than two decades—of service to our Nation—all citizen soldiers.

Now, when I think of whom I met yesterday, when I think of these soldiers—men and women of all races, of all ages—when I think of these soldiers who give up their lives or time away—more than a year away from their families—one of these soldiers told me his child was born when he was overseas—when I think about them, I think about the duty we have to them.

I know the Presiding Officer has spoken about this many times. The President and this Congress, for too many years in the past, have simply not taken care of veterans the way we should take care of them. For the kind of service we have asked of them and sacrifice we have asked them to make for our country, we haven't—even in a small way in too many cases—paid them back.

That is why I come to the floor today just for a few more minutes to talk about the GI bill: the post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of

2007. A whole generation of Americans in the 1940s and 1950s, a whole generation of soldiers and sailors and marines were educated because of the GI bill. They were people who came back without much money, enrolled in school, and the Government—paying them back for their service for winning World War II, for Korea, for all of their service to our country—the Government decided the most important thing to do was to give them the kind of educational opportunity that they earned and that they deserved.

Do we know what happened? It wasn't just that the GI bill helped thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, a few million returning veterans, it is also what it did for the prosperity of our Nation because without the GI bill in the 1940s and 1950s and 1960s, we would not have had the educated workforce, we wouldn't have the kind of educated citizens this country, the "greatest generation," gave to us.

That is why a government program such as this, a program that is all about opportunity to give these veterans the GI bill, give these veterans an opportunity, an education, will not only help them personally and help their families, it will help their neighborhoods, it will help their communities, and it will help us to make our country even more prosperous. That is the whole point of programs such as the GI bill. It should help those veterans whom I met yesterday, those returning soldiers, some of them still in the Reserve, some of them having served their time and left. But that GI bill will spark the kind of economic growth and expansion for a whole generation of Americans.

With programs such as this one, when we provide opportunities to college students, when we provide opportunities through Head Start, when we provide opportunities with helping families through the earned-income tax credit, not only does it help those individuals and help those families, it helps our communities, it helps our States, it helps our country.

That is the story of the GI bill. That is why we need a new GI bill that really does pay those veterans back, pay those soldiers, sailors, and marines back for the service they gave our country. It is the smart thing to do. It is the morally right thing to do. It is the best thing to do for our country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

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.

## NEW SOLUTIONS AND PRIORITIES

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, last month I traveled to dozens of communities throughout my State. I actually visited 47 counties in Minnesota in January, from towns on our southern border with Iowa to towns way up on our northern border with Canada. I saw a lot of great entrepreneurial activity out there. I got to see ethanol plants. I was with Senator CONRAD in North Dakota for his entrepreneurial forum. I got to jump on solar panels to show that hail doesn't hurt solar panels in Starbuck, MN.

What I heard from people throughout our State—and I think what we are hearing from people throughout America—is that Washington must provide a new direction to address the Nation's priorities and solve our economic challenges. They know what is happening. There has been a doubling of foreclosure rates in rural Minnesota. We have seen rising energy prices, as my colleagues can imagine when it is so cold. I was in International Falls, where it gets to be 10 below zero. In International Falls, it is pretty cold. In Embarrass, MN, it can get pretty cold.

There are also skyrocketing health costs. I heard about that not just from individual families and workers but from small businesses that are having trouble keeping their employees on health care plans or big businesses that are having trouble competing internationally because of the costs of health care.

What people told me out there is they need new solutions and new priorities from Washington.

What I want to talk about today is, first of all, the President's budget and how it doesn't give us new solutions, it doesn't give us new priorities, and then our own stimulus package that is so important to push through this Congress and not to be obstructed.

The President's budget continues a familiar pattern of misplaced priorities. It continues a 7-year pattern of fiscal irresponsibility, borrowing money and then leaving an ever-larger debt to our children. In just 7 years, this administration took a budget surplus of \$158 billion and turned it into what will soon be a budget deficit of something like \$300 billion, \$400 billion. It is quite an accomplishment. Meanwhile, this new budget continues to neglect critical investments that are needed to strengthen our economy and our Nation in a very difficult time. It does not make the investments we need in our Nation's transportation infrastructure. It does not make the investments we need in developing renewable energy sources to move us toward greater independence and security. It does not make the investments we need to get new technology to solve our climate change problem—what I call building a bridge to the 21st century. It doesn't do that. It doesn't make the investment we need in the basic medical and scientific research that has always been a key driver of our country's in-

novation and growth. It doesn't include a shift in these priorities, and it also doesn't include how we are going to pay for it.

When I went around our State in January, people were willing to talk about reform. They are willing to talk about rolling back some of these Bush tax cuts on the wealthiest people—people making over \$200,000, \$250,000 a year—so we can actually pay for some of the investments we need in our State. People out in rural Minnesota said: Fine by me. Roll back those tax cuts on people making over \$200,000 a year. That is not me. Meanwhile, I have a road that I can't even go on because it has so many potholes and that has a shoulder that is going downhill where four people were killed in the last few months. I am happy if you can put some money into infrastructure.

Here are a few examples in Minnesota of how the President got the budget wrong. I think people are well aware of our tragic bridge collapse. That was only six blocks from my house, when a bridge just fell down in the middle of a summer day in the middle of America. It was a tragic wake-up call that the Nation's bridges are deteriorating faster than we can repair or replace them. So what does the administration do in its budget? It reduces funding for the Federal highway construction fund.

Minnesota is home to premier medical institutions such as the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota that conduct breakthrough research on lifesaving cures. Many of the researchers at these institutions depend on Federal funding. So what does this administration do in its budget? What was I going to tell the people in our State, when I met with them at the Mall of America, who are trying to find a cure for children's diabetes, for the parents who met with me as we see autism on the rise and we are trying to find a cure or the people on the Alzheimer's ward? What does the President say to them? Well, for the sixth year in a row, it freezes funding for the National Institutes of Health, the Nation's leading medical research agency that provides essential funding to doctors and scientists.

The budget also cuts health care services. For example, the administration is calling for an 86-percent cut in funding for rural health programs, including rural health outreach grants and the Rural Hospital Flexibility Grant Program.

I can tell my colleagues what I heard when I was up in Brickstown, MN. I was up there. They have a hospital. They have one surgeon—one surgeon. You have to go miles and miles and miles to find another hospital. You can see towns miles and miles away, it is so flat up there. But they have this one hospital that is so important to their area. The surgeon is reaching retirement age. He might even want to retire now, but he can't because they can't find another surgeon to go up there. If they don't find another surgeon, they

are not going to be able to have babies born in that hospital because they don't have a doctor who can do a C-section.

Much of my State is rural despite the thriving metropolitan area we have in the Twin Cities and thriving places such as Moorhead and Rochester and Duluth, and we have these rural hospitals and health care providers that depend on this Federal funding to provide services for the rural residents of my State. It is not just a nicety; it is a necessity.

In Minnesota, we are on the leading edge of the renewable energy revolution that promises to transform our economy and lead us toward greater energy security and independence. So what does the administration do in this budget? It cuts funding for solar energy research, hydropower, and industrial energy efficiency. It also cuts Department of Agriculture programs that are important for developing new farm-based energy sources such as biomass and cellulosic ethanol.

Now, we heard the President at the State of the Union talking about moving to this new energy era. Well, put the money where the mouth is. It is not there. How are we going to stop spending \$200,000 a minute on foreign oil if we are cutting the possibility of research into things such as cellulosic ethanol which, if done right with prairie grass, which puts carbon back into our soil, will allow the prairie grass to be grown on marginal farmland? This is the direction we need to go but not if we are going to cut funding. We have seen these wind turbines in our State where people are so excited they have wind turbines everywhere, wind turbine manufacturing, but every time the wind tax credit goes away, the investment stops about 8 months earlier because it is like a game of red light-green light: They don't know what is happening. So this is what the administration does.

This budget would shut down the U.S. Department of Agriculture's North Central Soil Conservation Research Lab in Morris, MN. That was one of the places I visited in January. This lab, on the University of Minnesota campus, is at the forefront of research and development to promote homegrown renewable energy. This is our energy future, but you would hardly know it from looking at the President's budget.

Finally, as I mentioned, it has been a little cold in Minnesota. It did get up to 10 degrees below zero one day, but it was down to 20 degrees below zero in Embarrass about a week ago. Nationwide, the average household is expected to pay 11 percent more for heating this winter compared to last year. Families who rely on home heating oil are facing record prices 30 to 50 percent above last winter.

What does the administration do in its budget? It cuts in half the emergency funding for the low-income heating assistance program. This is a program which enjoys bipartisan support.

It provides much needed help to seniors and families who are struggling with ever-rising heating costs. Maybe the President thinks we are going to have so much global warming that we don't need this heating, I don't know. While these prices are going up and you are in the middle of winter, you shouldn't cut the heating program. I hope the next President see things differently.

I believe deeply in the importance of fiscal responsibility. I support the pay-as-you-go rule for budgeting. My husband and I keep our financial house in order, and we think the Government should too. If you want to talk about fiscal responsibility, you don't have it in this budget. There is no willingness to talk about doing things differently. Do we want a budget that offers tax giveaways to the wealthy or one that provides relief to middle-class families who are squeezed by the rising costs of housing, energy, health care, and tuition? You know what happened on the AMT debate. We voted to pay for it by taking money away from the hedge fund operators, but the other side would not do it. Do we want to give lucrative favors to the rich and the corporations, or do we want to invest in our future prosperity, in things such as research and development and renewable energy?

Instead of investing in the oil cartels in the Mideast, we need to invest in the farmers and workers of the Midwest—maybe a few in Vermont, as well, Mr. President. Do we want a budget that continues to send tens of billions of dollars to Iraq—I think it is \$12 billion a month—or do we want a budget that provides our local and State law enforcement with the resources they need to protect public safety here at home?

I want to see an administration that aims for fiscal responsibility by rolling back the tax cuts for the wealthiest people making over \$200,000 or \$250,000 a year.

I would like to see an administration that aims for fiscal responsibility by eliminating offshore tax havens for multimillionaires.

I would like to see an administration that aims for fiscal responsibility by ending the tax breaks and royalties that have been handed out year after year to the big oil companies.

I would like to see an administration that aims for fiscal responsibility by allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices for seniors. Exactly what we predicted would happen has; you are seeing the prices go up, not down. They just had a re-up period for Medicare Part D. Seniors in my State are trying to figure out all these call-in lines and are trying to save a little money, and they are caught in the doughnut hole. This could have been done better. It wasn't done in a fiscally responsible way.

The President's budget doesn't provide the new priorities and new solutions America needs. Instead, it continues to take us down the wrong path for the future.

Even as we must plan and invest for the long term, I am also concerned that we have our priorities right in the short term. At this time, the urgent priority for America is to get our economy moving forward again and not let it weaken further. That is why we have put together an economic stimulus package that would respond promptly and responsibly. It would get this economy moving with tax rebates that are fair to the middle class, carefully targeted, and fiscally responsible. But tonight we find out that we are not going to be able to vote on that tomorrow.

I do commend Senator BAUCUS and Senator GRASSLEY for their swift work in getting this comprehensive, simple, and effective measure to the floor.

A short-term stimulus package needs to be targeted for the people who need it most. Although economists are wary to declare that we are officially in a recession, many middle-class American families have been feeling the effects of an economic slowdown for months. From the impact of the mortgage crisis on the value of homes in their neighborhoods, to the skyrocketing costs of the oil that fuels their cars and heats their homes, to the rising prices in the grocery store, the middle class is feeling economic pressure from each and every side.

When I went across my State on our Main Street tour in January, no matter where I went—all 47 counties—the economy was the first on the list of what the people in my State wanted to talk about. From city hall, to the cafe stops, to the turkey-processing places, to the little solar panel company, that is all they wanted to talk about—the economy. The message was loud and clear. I heard a lot from the middle-class families. Even before we began to experience this economic slowdown, the families were finding it harder to get by.

To give you a sense of what we have in our State, in Minnesota, the unemployment rate recently jumped to 4.9 percent, up from 4.4 percent the month before. Our State lost 23,000 jobs in the last 6 months alone. Over 50,000 Minnesota families lost their homes to foreclosure in the past 3 months. Home heating prices for Minnesota families have risen by 14.1 percent per household in the past year alone.

In order to get communities along Main Streets in Minnesota and across our country booming again, we need both short- and long-term solutions. While everybody agrees the rebate checks will be a part of whatever targeted and effective stimulus package Congress ends up sending to the President, I am here today to voice my strong support for several additional provisions that are in our Senate proposal. These proposals would do much to help improve the middle-class lives behind those statistics I just talked about. These are real people all over our State. These proposals are a proven stimulus for our economy. They deserve a full debate and proper consideration in our Chamber.

First, we need to expand our rebate effort in order to ensure that certain deserving groups are not left out. As I said, part of creating a targeted stimulus for the economy is through helping those who need it most. I was sorry to see that the House proposal fell short.

It is crucial to this package that the 20 million American seniors who worked all their lives, paid taxes, and contributed to our society in countless ways will get rebate checks. That is the first point. We need to include the seniors.

In the past week, I have heard from hundreds of Minnesota seniors who told me that the Senate proposal to include Social Security recipients is the only fair way to stimulate the economy. I agree, and I support the Senate effort to include seniors.

It is also crucial that we include disabled veterans in this package. These men and women have served our country both here and abroad. They signed up to serve; there wasn't a waiting line. When they come up and people are getting rebates, there should not be a waiting line. Go to the end of the line—you disabled veterans, who served our country, are at the end of the line; you don't get a rebate check. That is not right.

Second, I firmly believe we should include an extension of the clean energy tax incentives in any stimulus package. We can do that in another package, but we have to do it. These benefits certainly meet the definition of what we need for a short-term stimulus package.

If you look at the data, we have seen a revolution going on across the country in wind and solar and other forms of renewable energy. This has been like a game of red light-green light. You can go through the lights, and then it lapses for 6 months. It goes on again, and then it lapses. The proven statistic is that every time it lapses, the investors stop investing. That is not what we want. Our country came up with all of the technology for wind and solar, and now we are falling behind the rest of the world in developing it because we don't have the investment tax credits in place.

Third, I believe the stimulus package should also include additional funding for LIHEAP. Working families in Minnesota and across the Nation should not have to choose between paying home heating bills and putting food on the table. Increasing LIHEAP funding to keep pace with the skyrocketing price of oil is essential to this stimulus package.

I see the stimulus package as a first step, and it is crucial to support it. But long after those rebate checks are spent, we are going to need a long-term economic strategy in response to the problem or we are going to be back where we started in the first place. We need an economy that creates good, stable middle-class jobs. We need infrastructure investment so we don't have



bridges falling down in the middle of America. We need energy investment. That will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create good jobs in the green-collar energy sector.

In the Senate, we have our stimulus package, and it is a good one. The people we serve are asking for a new direction and priority. That means being fiscally responsible, being willing to roll back some of the tax cuts for the wealthiest, closing down loopholes, negotiating for lower prescription drug prices, and taking the oil giveaways and putting them into renewables. Those are new priorities for this country.

Last year, we made a downpayment on change in this country. We moved toward a more responsible budget process. We gave working Americans an increase in the minimum wage. Today, we can continue that progress and continue that change with a system that is fair for all Americans. That means getting the stimulus package done, including these necessary changes with seniors and disabled veterans and the LIHEAP funding, and then looking at the long term and making sure in this package—or in another one—we get the tax cuts in place for clean energy and do something about fiscal responsibility. And we are willing to talk about change and really do it.

This is our moment. The American people have spoken. At least they spoke to me in Crookston and Worthington and Starbuck. I think if the people who live in those towns were standing here, they would tell the Senate what we need to do. So let's get it done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, during the last several weeks and months, in fact, there has been increased discussion and comments about the state of our economy. As you know, last month our Nation actually shed some 17,000 jobs and many economists tell us we are now in a recession and that is certainly true for some parts of this country.

The House, the Senate, and the White House are wrestling with an economic stimulus package, and President Bush has presented his new budget. This week, the Director of the OMB and the Secretary of the Treasury will come before the Senate Budget Committee to discuss their views on the economy.

Let me begin by stating how dismayed I was by the budget President Bush has provided us today. Frankly, this budget is unconscionable and re-

flects priorities that are almost impossible to comprehend. While providing hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks for the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of our population over the next decade, this President has proposed major cuts in health care, LIHEAP, weatherization, nutrition, housing programs, and other basic needs for moderate- and low-income people. This is a Robin Hood in reverse budget. This is a budget that takes from the poor and working families, those most in need, and gives to millionaires and billionaires, those least in need.

This proposed budget tells us how out of touch this President and his administration are with the needs of the American people.

Let me be very clear; as a Member of the Senate Budget Committee, I will do everything I can to make sure Bush's budget is rejected and that we bring forth a new budget that reflects the priorities of all our people and not just the wealthiest and most powerful.

Most Americans understand, for example, our health care system is disintegrating. Since George W. Bush has been President, 8.6 million Americans have lost their health insurance, and we now live in a country in which 47 million of our neighbors have no health insurance. We live at a time when health costs are soaring, when people are paying larger and larger deductibles and copayments. That is the reality of American health care today.

How does President Bush respond to this crisis in health care? His response is to slash funding for Medicare, slash funding for Medicaid, slash funding for rural health care programs, making a terrible situation even worse.

I understand it will be asking too much for this President to stand up to the insurance companies, to stand up to the drug companies and move us toward a national health care program which guarantees health care for all our people, something, by the way, which every other major country on Earth now has.

I understand that is something George W. Bush is not going to do. I understand that. But at the very least, at a time when some 17,000 Americans a year die because they lack health insurance, he should not be making a terrible situation even worse. He need not deny health care to even more Americans.

In the State of Vermont and through many parts of our country, Minnesota included, we have experienced extremely cold weather this winter. At the same time, as every American knows, the price of home heating oil has more than doubled, skyrocketed since President Bush has been in office. The result is the LIHEAP program, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which keeps millions of seniors and low-income households warm in the winter, is stretched to the breaking point. That is the reality.

Cold winter, price of home heating oil soaring, the program is stretched.

In State after State, because of soaring fuel prices, either fewer people are able to access LIHEAP or the amount of help they are getting has been significantly reduced. That is simply the arithmetic of the situation: lower payments, fewer people. Those are the choices States have with reduced LIHEAP budgets.

I know President Bush has no problem, no problem whatsoever, with the fact that his good pals at ExxonMobil have announced the largest profits in the history of the world for the third consecutive year, over \$40 billion in profits in the year 2007. I am quite sure the President has no problem with that, and I understand that. He has no problem, apparently, with the fact that home heating oil prices are now at \$3.30 a gallon. I am sure he has no problems with the fact that a few years ago, the former CEO of ExxonMobil, a gentleman named Lee Raymond, received a \$400 million retirement package from that company. It is not a problem for the President of the United States. He is close to those people. As he once famously said: That is his base.

But despite the President's lack of concern about rising fuel costs, it is beyond comprehension that he would slash the LIHEAP program by \$570 million, a 22-percent reduction from last year. The price of home heating oil is soaring, more and more people are losing their LIHEAP benefits, and the President's response in the midst of this crisis is to slash the program. That is pretty cruel. What is a low-income senior living on Social Security supposed to do when the weather gets below zero and she cannot heat her home? That is the story today, and you propose to make it even worse next year.

At a time when millions of low-income seniors are struggling to survive on inadequate Social Security benefits, this President in his budget wants to cut back on nutrition programs for low-income seniors, in addition to cutting back on low-income housing and senior citizen housing.

Hunger in the United States of America is increasing. Emergency food shelves are simply running out of groceries. There is no moral justification for the President of the United States to be cutting back on nutrition programs for low-income elderly Americans by proposing to completely eliminate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program which is providing assistance to well over 4,000 low-income senior citizens in the State of Vermont and hundreds of thousands nationally. With hunger going up, the President cuts back on an important nutritional program for low-income seniors.

I am a member of the Veterans' Committee, and I am proud that last year, against opposition from the White House, we substantially increased funding for the VA and are providing billions more so veterans can gain access

to quality VA hospitals and clinics. That is what we accomplished. That was the right thing to do. And yet despite all of his rhetoric about how much he loves the troops and how much he respects the troops—last week, I might add, in his State of the Union Address, President Bush said:

We must keep faith with all who have risked life and limb so that we might live in freedom and peace.

That was the President's statement 1 week ago at the State of the Union Address. But today, after all that flowery rhetoric, the President has proposed in his budget a very sharp increase in health care fees from \$250 to \$750 for veterans who access VA health care facilities. And there is no question, no doubt about it but that these increased fees, if put into effect, would result in driving many veterans out of VA health care which, in fact, is precisely the goal of that proposal. He wants to take veterans out of VA health care, which is consistent with what the President did several years ago when he threw large numbers of so-called category 8 veterans, those without service-connected disabilities, out of VA health care.

The words tell us how much he loves our soldiers, but actions tell us he is prepared to raise fees for veterans health care, with the result of removing many veterans from the VA system.

I say to President Bush that at a time when tens of thousands of our soldiers have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, please don't balance your budget on the backs of men and women who have put their lives on the line defending this country.

Since George W. Bush has been in office, we have seen recordbreaking deficits, and our national debt is now \$9.2 trillion, \$3 trillion more than when President Bush assumed office.

All of us in Congress want to move this country toward a balanced budget to make sure our kids and our grandchildren are not left with an enormous debt. But there are right ways to move toward a balanced budget and there are wrong ways to try to do that and, unfortunately, President Bush's budget moves us exactly in the wrong direction.

As many Americans know, since President Bush has been in the White House, the middle class has been decimated, poverty has increased, and the gap between the very wealthiest people in our society and everyone else has grown wider. In fact, the United States now has by far the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth.

Sadly, the gap between the upper-income people, the wealthiest people in our country, and the middle class is increasingly making our country look like a poor developing country. We have the same economic structure, in terms of distribution of wealth and income, that countries such as Brazil and Mexico have, rather than looking like

other major industrialized countries in Europe, Scandinavia or in Canada.

I am aware a lot of facts and figures are thrown about on the floor of the Senate, but let me mention one fact I hope all Americans pay attention to, and that is that according to the latest statistics available, the wealthiest 300,000 Americans—that is men, women, and children—take in more income than the bottom 150 million Americans. In other words, the upper one-tenth of 1 percent, 300,000 people, take in more money than do the bottom 50 percent. One-tenth of 1 percent. Fifty percent. And that is what is going on in the American economy today.

Tragically, that gap between the superrich and everybody else is growing wider and wider every single year. For those people who live in the bottom 90 percent of the population, the vast majority of our citizens, their average income was \$33,000 way back in 1973. Today, despite all of the free trade agreements and globalization, despite all of the huge increases in technology, despite the significant growth in worker productivity, in inflation-accounted-for dollars, that \$33,000 per year has declined to \$29,000 a year, which is about a \$75-a-week pay cut.

That is what is going on in the economy today, and has been going on over the last three decades: people on top, doing phenomenally well; people at the bottom, the situation is getting worse; people in the middle are getting squeezed, working longer hours for lower wages. And perhaps those trends tell us why in today's Washington Post a front-page story was headlined "U.S. Concern Over Economy Is Highest In Year." That was the headline on the front page of the Washington Post today. The first line of that story tells us that "The public views the national economy now more negatively than at any point in nearly 15 years."

What is going on is that the American people are getting sick and tired—they are getting sick and tired—of paying \$3.15 for a gallon of gas when ExxonMobil enjoys the highest profits in the history of the world. They are tired of paying outrageously high home heating costs. They are tired of losing their health insurance. They are tired of losing their pensions. They are tired of not being able to find affordable childcare for their kids. They are tired of seeing their kids come out of college \$20,000 or \$30,000 in debt and not able to find decent-paying jobs.

And not only are they tired, they are worried. They are worried that for the first time in the modern history of this great country—despite the fact that so many people are working so hard, they are worried that their kids will have a lower standard of living than they do. They are worried that the American dream, which is what this country has always been about—the dream which says that if parents work hard, their kids will do better than they do—they are worried that dream is being lost.

That is why there is so much deep concern about the economy. It is not just health care, it is not just the loss of pensions, it is not only outrageously high prices when you fill up your car, and it is not only home heating oil; it is the fact that when you go shopping, what you are doing is buying products made in China and Mexico that used to be made in the United States. Many American people understand that we are never going to have a great economy if we are not producing the products we need and the people throughout the world need.

The American people understand that there is something profoundly wrong when 20, 25 years ago the largest employer in the United States was General Motors—manufacturer of cars—that paid workers good wages, good benefits, and there was a strong union, and today the largest employer in the United States is Wal-Mart, with low wages, minimal benefits, and vehemently antiunion.

The American people are getting the point that people such as President Bush work tirelessly on behalf of the wealthy and the powerful. But who is standing up for the people who make our country go every day—for the cops and the firemen and the farmers and the people who work in factories and the nurses and the doctors? Who is standing up for those people? Maybe the time is now for us to begin standing up for those people.

In the midst of all of this, the President has brought forth a budget that punishes working people, punishes poor people, but says to the wealthiest people in this country, the people who have now had it so good since the late 1920s, and says to them: Hey, I—the President—am going to help you. In his budget the President wants to repeal the estate tax, which would provide \$1 trillion in tax relief to the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent. Let me say that again. Over a 20-year period, \$1 trillion in tax relief to the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of our population.

That is what this budget, this Robin-Hood-in-reverse budget, is all about. If you are old and trying to survive on Social Security, and if you are going to go cold this winter and next winter, the President wants to cut back on the heating assistance you receive. If you are a low-income American, or perhaps an American without any health insurance right now, the President wants to cut back on Medicaid and Medicare. If you are an American who lives in a home that lacks insulation, and if you are putting money into your heating bill and that heat is going out your poorly insulated home, it is going out the window, going out the roof, you have a President who wants to completely eliminate the low-income weather assistance program. If you are a veteran who has put your life on the line defending this country, the President wants to make it harder for you to access VA health care by substantially increasing your fees. But if you

are a billionaire, the President is all there for you. If you are one of the wealthiest families in America, in this budget the President has brought forth today, you are going to get huge tax breaks. Let me cite one example of how preposterous this scenario is.

One of the wealthiest families in America is the Walton family. The Walton family, as I think most people know, owns Wal-Mart. This one family is worth, it is estimated, a combined \$82 billion. There are a number of sons and daughters, but combined they are worth about \$82 billion—one family. Incredible as it may sound, under the President's proposal of completely eliminating the estate tax, that one family would receive over \$30 billion in tax breaks.

So here we are. If you are old and can't afford to heat your home, we are going to cut the program that keeps you warm. If you are sick and you have no health insurance, we are going to cut the program that gives you access to a doctor. If you are living in a home where you are losing all kinds of heat through poor insulation, we are not going to help you. If you are a veteran who has served your country, we are going to raise fees for you to get into a VA hospital or a clinic. But if you are one of the wealthiest families in America, we are going to give you \$30 billion in tax breaks.

I say this without glee, but President Bush will probably go down in history as one of the least popular Presidents this country has ever had. And you don't need to know anything more to understand why that is so. A President who would give hundreds of billions in tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires and then cut back on the needs of working families, senior citizens, and veterans is not a President who is representing the vast majority of our people. I will do everything that I can as a member of the Budget Committee to not only make sure President Bush's budget is not implemented, but I will work with my colleagues to fashion a budget that begins to address the real needs of the American people.

There is great disenchantment in this country about what is going on here in Washington, but I also note there is great hope out there. There is a belief that if we come together as a people, if we remember where we came from, if we are prepared to uphold the values that have made us a great country, if we are willing to stand up to the powerful special interests who have so much influence over what goes on in this institution—if we can do those things—not only can we once again create a great middle class, not only can we once again protect the most vulnerable people in our society, but perhaps, more importantly, we can once again give the American people a faith in their Government that they presently lack. That is something we must do.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I am pleased to support the Senate's bipar-

tisan legislation designed to stimulate the economy and benefit working families, assist seniors and veterans, provide some relief for the unemployed, and encourage business and energy investments. I know that there are numerous families throughout the Nation who have found themselves working harder and having less discretionary income due to increases in living expenses such as gasoline and food costs. In my home state of Hawaii where the cost of living is already high, especially due to housing, families are struggling. They, like the rest of the Nation, have been hit hard by the decline in the economy. While Hawaii's unemployment is not as high as in other parts of the Nation, it is not uncommon for individuals in Hawaii to work two or three jobs just to provide their families with food and shelter and to have multiple generations living under the same roof in order to save money.

One of the key provisions of the Senate's economic stimulus package is to put money in the hands of low-income and middle-class individuals and families by offering a rebate of \$500 per individual and \$1000 per couple, plus \$300 for every child under the age of 17. For the many families in this Nation struggling to make ends meet, these rebates will help ease the financial pressures they are currently facing. Far too often, due to the downturn in our Nation's economy, families are finding that they simply cannot afford important, basic needs. Consequently, they are forced to make very difficult decisions and even more difficult sacrifices. More and more Americans are relying on high-interest credit cards, not to buy luxuries but just to provide daily necessities. The rebates included in the Senate package will help families pay down those bills and provide much needed financial relief.

The Senate Finance Committee's package also improves upon the House-passed bill by extending these rebates to senior citizens and disabled veterans. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, I am strongly supportive of provisions in this bill that improve the House version of the bill by including hundreds of thousands of disabled vets in the stimulus package. It is vitally important that we ensure that our Nation's wounded warriors and their families who have sacrificed so much are given the assistance they need. I am pleased to support the extension of benefits in the Senate Finance bill to 20 million senior citizens living on Social Security. For many low-income senior citizens, whose sole income is their monthly Social Security check, a rebate check could provide much needed relief in addition to providing further stimulus to the country's economy.

In addition to the rebates included in the Finance Committee package, another important provision is the extension of unemployment benefits. I know

that for many workers who have found themselves out of jobs due to layoffs or business failures, unemployment benefits provide a much-needed bridge to get them over the immediate economic financial crises until they can find employment. Providing an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits for individuals who have been caught in the economic downturn and another 13 weeks of benefits for workers in states with high rates of unemployment will go a long way toward providing the support they need as they look for new jobs in this difficult economic environment.

I am also supportive of provisions in the Senate economic stimulus package that will encourage businesses to invest. Increasing the carryback period for net operating losses from 2 to 5 years, for example, will benefit the housing industry by allowing builders to avoid selling land and houses at greatly reduced prices and enable less costly financing. In addition, provisions to extend renewable energy and energy efficiency tax cuts for a year will help boost the economy by generating new employment opportunities. Given the growing demand for energy coupled with rising prices, it is critical to America's economy that we provide incentives to invest in clean energy production.

As the Senate considers this bill, I will continue to work to ensure that the economic stimulus package passed by Congress is structured to help hard-working men and women who find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. We must see that a broad segment of the population, including the unemployed, senior citizens, and disabled veterans, receives assistance and that business and environmental investment is encouraged. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in supporting the Senate version of the economic stimulus package.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR JAMES W. SPAIN

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I remember being on the Senate floor on September 12, 2001. That was the day after the horrendous attack on our Nation. It was the only time in my 33 years here that I can remember the public galleries being closed. There was an unprecedented amount of security around the Capitol. But every Senator came onto the floor of the Senate that day. We wanted to indicate to the world that this symbol of democracy would not close. I especially remember