

we have to get 60 votes—60 votes—60 votes—because they know very much it becomes a hardship. But that is what they are doing.

I ask unanimous consent to have this and another quote printed in the RECORD.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mrs. BOXER. In 1993, when they opposed the Democrats' economic plan, back then, that plan that set us off on economic recovery and economic prosperity, they said almost the same exact words: We are not involved, it is pork, it is this, it is that, it is a big bill. They held up the bill.

It is all the same. It is not the GOP; it is the SOP, the "same old party." Right now we can't be the same old party.

Democrats can't be the same old party, Republicans can't be the same old party.

We need to join together. I hope more of my colleagues on the other side will join us. I thank the three who have, and I look forward to working with them as we move out into the future.

EXHIBIT 1

1993 QUOTES

Last, the American people should know unequivocally this plan does not reduce our long-term deficit. What I am suggesting is, if you like these taxes, wait around because the deficit starts back up in 1998 even with all of these taxes and more will be needed. And I ask where are we going to get the spending cuts and the money to bring it under control? My guess is more taxes year after year.—Senator Packwood August 6, 1993

This is a pork alert: Pork alert. This bill is 1,800 pages. We will not know until next April 15, probably, all the stuff that has been slid in here. Are we talking about, oh, just a little bit of money? A few million here and there? No; we are talking about big sums.

So when you stand up and say the Republicans have not been involved, let me assure you, we should have been involved. We would have liked to have been involved. But we would like to concentrate on spending cuts at first. And then we can talk about other things, like economic growth incentives, that we would like to see considered in this process.—Senator Lott August 6, 1993

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE STIMULUS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday the Senate cast one of the most expensive votes in history. We have heard a lot from our friends about the dangers of deficits over the last few years. Yet the Senate this week voted to spend more than \$1.2 trillion, including interest, over the next 10 years. The projected annual budget deficit for this particular fiscal year is also \$1.2 trillion. We are told, of course, this is

just the beginning. We have known for weeks the Treasury Secretary is planning a financial rescue plan. We still don't know the cost. Apparently, the sticker shock would have been too much to take, 1 day after the Senate voted to spend \$1.2 trillion on a stimulus—all of this on top of the \$400 billion Omnibus appropriations bill we will soon vote on, which will bring discretionary spending for the Federal Government for the very first time to over \$1 trillion this year.

Americans are wondering how we are going to pay for all of this. Judging by the market reaction to Secretary Geithner's announcement yesterday and the newspaper editorials this morning, it is clear everyone is looking for a little more detail. With that in mind, the importance of a thorough review of the administration's budget is all the more important, so we know the totality of what the administration is asking of taxpayers.

Any parent knows you don't buy a new car and plan the summer vacation before you set the family budget for the year. I think Americans would like to know exactly how the administration plans to pay for all these things in the context of all the normal annual spending.

In the 24 days Congress has been in session this year, Congressional Democrats have agreed to spend more than \$50 billion a day. Americans know they have a limit on their spending. This week they are wondering what the Government's limit is.

ENERGY PRODUCTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, our new Secretary of the Interior has weighed in on developing American oil and gas resources located on our Outer Continental Shelf. As the process moves forward, it is my hope he will be mindful that hindering the growth of responsible domestic energy production means hindering an increase of American jobs at a time when many people are out of work. It also means hindering America's dependence on foreign oil, which has a direct impact, of course, on the price of gasoline.

Last summer, Congress heard from Americans, and I heard from countless Kentuckians, demanding a balanced approach to our energy problem that includes boosting American energy production as well as conserving what we already have. I hope the Secretary of Interior will keep the views of the American people in mind as we go forward.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THIS RECESSION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, you know in your State of New York and I know in my State of Illinois what this recession really means. In December, the recession hit my home State of Illinois hard. We lost 1,200 jobs a day in the month of December—36,000 jobs. That is a hit that continues, I am afraid, in the month of January and maybe even in the early part of February. The overall unemployment rate for America is 7.6 percent. Madam President, 3.6 million jobs have been lost since the beginning of the recession several months ago. Clearly, that is the element which is driving our discussion now about what to do.

There are some on the other side of the aisle in Congress who argue that the best thing to do is nothing, let the economy solve its own problems. But, sadly, many of us are meeting the casualties of this recession, and many of us know them personally because they are in our families.

I talk to a lot of my friends who are struggling. It does not sound like much, you know, when they say: My hours have been cut back. A friend of mine, a lady who is raising three children, a single mom raising three kids, had her hours cut back. Her agency does counseling for drug addiction. So she is only working three-quarters of the regular time she was expecting. Well, as a result of that cutback in her pay, she could not pay her rent, and, sadly, she is now facing some of the hardest decisions of her life. So just a cutback in pay for many people who live on the margin makes all the difference. And then, of course, there are those who lost their jobs altogether. Many of those people find they stand the possibility of losing their homes. They cannot make the mortgage payments, and they are facing foreclosure. Their savings that have been devastated by the decline in the stock market have now become the only place to turn. They have had to make serious decisions.

I talked to groups of college presidents from Illinois who came to see me, and some of them, community colleges. The colleges and universities are struggling because a lot of students are sitting there saying: I cannot keep going to school. I mean, dad lost his job and mom is working, and I am a big drain on their savings at a time when they do not have it. So colleges and universities are scrambling all over the campus to try to get people to stay in school. They are afraid they are going to lose them. Community college representatives who came to visit me yesterday said, incidentally, their enrollment is up because a lot of the students say: I can no longer go to the expensive other school, so I am going to come back and do community college courses and try to keep up with it.

Lifestyles are changing. People are making decisions; some of them we hope will be temporary, some may not. That is what troubles me when we look

at the debate in Congress. There are so many people who, I am afraid, are removed from this. It really would do a lot of Senators some good to get in touch with the real world out there and what people are going through. We are somewhat insulated in the life we lead, and we have to overcome that because the people who are the casualties and victims here are the ones who should be remembered when it comes to these votes.

Now, President Obama inherited this. I am not going to dwell on the mistakes and miscalculations of the previous administration. That is a matter of record. There is no point in going into that. That was yesterday. We need to talk about today and tomorrow. What are we going to do about this?

What the administration, what the President wants to do is to make sure we do not stand back as spectators and watch this collision that is occurring, destroying a lot of lives and a lot of people's hopes. So he came to us and said: We have to breathe some life into this economy. We think that this year in America, \$1 trillion less will be spent on goods and services, \$1 trillion taken out of the economy. What happens? Shops close. People are laid off if there is not economic activity. So what the President has said is: Let's infuse back into the economy government spending now to try to make up for that and to try to get us moving forward.

Now, I understand—and we all have to be honest about this—that the money we spend on this stimulus is money added to our Nation's debt. But failing to do anything and allowing this recession to continue to go downhill will increase our Nation's debt anyway and, of course, will add to a lot of suffering by families and businesses. So the President came forward and said: Let's focus on several things. First, let's provide tax relief to working families. They are struggling. They need a helping hand. Let's provide help in a safety net, a little more money for people who are unemployed, \$25 a week. For anybody who thinks that is a huge amount of money, that is \$100 a month for people unemployed. For most of us, that does not mean a lot; for people struggling to get by, it could be important.

Also, there is some help when it comes to continuing health insurance. That is one of the first things that happen when you lose a job—you lose your health insurance. The COBRA program allows you to turn to Government help for that, but it is darn expensive if you have to pay both the employee and employer share. So we are trying to provide a helping hand when it comes to the folks who have lost their health insurance, giving them a little bit of help so their families are not left defenseless to the next diagnosis or the next disease.

Then we add, for the poorest of the poor, those who are struggling the hardest, help with food stamps. You

know, if you keep track in your own community, you are going to find that a lot of pantries and church-run efforts to help feed people have more folks showing up than ever. Even those who are working part time are struggling to put food on the table. So we provided additional help when it comes to this supplementary feeding program to help families who are struggling the hardest.

I have often used this statistic, but I still marvel at the fact that one out of eight people in the State of Michigan is on food stamps—one out of eight. It shows you what has happened to their economy, and, sadly, many of our States are following in terms of our own needs.

So we have the tax cuts for working families, we have this safety net, and the President has also asked us to put money into spending that will not only create jobs but make an investment in America's future.

Transportation is the obvious thing to turn to, but it goes beyond that. President Obama would like to see us put more money into building libraries, laboratories, and the classrooms of the 21st century, modernizing schools so they are energy efficient, reducing the cost of energy. That is a good investment for families, and it is a great investment for schools. The President wants money to go in, as well, to health technology so we start computerizing medical records across America. That is a first step in bringing medical care into the 21st century. With computerized records, doctors and nurses are less likely to make mistakes. They are more likely to have all the information they need before they make a diagnosis and suggest a treatment. It will reduce the cost of medical care and reduce the number of mistakes made, which is very important. That is money well spent.

The President focuses on energy. He is right to do so. We have to understand, as long as we are dependent on foreign nations for our major energy sources, we are at their mercy. We saw it happen when gasoline was over \$4 a gallon, and it could happen again. We have to be thoughtful in the way we move forward in this economy, creating jobs but looking for more energy efficiency, more energy independence. That is part of the President's goal.

Yesterday, Secretary of the Treasury Mr. Geithner came forward with a plan dealing with banking institutions. It is a complex problem, and it is a multi-faceted response. It tries to get at the heart of these banks that, sadly, have portfolios riddled with mortgages that have been overvalued. We have to get to the bottom line so the banks have solid balance sheets and the people have more confidence in them and, importantly, the credit being offered by these institutions starts coming forward so businesses, large and small, individuals buying homes or automobiles, have a chance.

It is a big agenda, and there are a lot of people on the other side of the aisle

who say: We shouldn't do any of this. What are we doing this for? The economy will fix itself.

I disagree. The American people expect us to find solutions, do our best to come up with good-faith efforts to find solutions. They expect us to work together and not squabble, to try to find give-and-take that leads to a good solution. They want to make sure there is accountability. They are mad—I am too—that \$350 billion was spent several months ago for the so-called TARP, and at the end of the day, a lot of people said: How much did they spend and what did it do?

That is taxpayer dollars. We have a responsibility to be transparent and be held accountable as part of that. They certainly expect us to do this on a timely basis. They don't want Congress chewing over this issue for weeks and months while the economy continues to decline.

Some have suggested: Are you saying this is going to work? Is this perfect? The answer is, no; I am not sure. But if we do nothing, I know what will happen. It is going to get progressively worse, where more people lose their jobs, more businesses fail, more families suffer, and we will see a spiral head downhill and continue not only in the United States but around the world. That is why what we are doing in the stimulus program is so important, that we get it done. As we speak, last-minute negotiations are underway for the stimulus bill. I hope we can get it done even today to send a clear message across the United States and maybe to the rest of the world, as they are paying attention, that we take it seriously. We are not going to buy into a Herbert Hoover mentality that everything will get well if we leave it alone. It is not going to happen.

This patient, the American economy, is in serious need of attention now. We need to apply the tourniquets to stop the bleeding. We need to make a good diagnosis and order the medicine and treatment that is essential. It has to be done in a timely fashion. I encourage my colleagues to come together. Fortunately for us, three Republicans stepped forward in the Senate and joined this effort. We could not have done it without them. We have listened to them. We have accepted their counsel. We have made changes and compromises. We have tried to work together. I invite even more to finally realize that just standing back and saying: No, I will not do a thing, isn't going to solve this problem. We are expected to work together.

We understand what led up to this; we don't want to dwell on the past. But we want to look forward to a new America that gets back on its feet using the spirit of this country to restore the economy and get us moving forward again.

Mrs. BOXER. Will my friend yield for a few questions?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mrs. BOXER. I was thinking the other day to when we had another difficult crisis of confidence in the economy in 1993, when Bill Clinton was elected and we had deficits as far as the eye could see and debt as far as the eye could see. Things were slowing. We were in difficulty. A new President came forward, Bill Clinton, and we had the Congress, the Democrats did. We passed a budget. We did it without one Republican vote. Thank goodness here we have three. We have the 60-vote supermajority Republicans are insisting upon. If you remember, it was Senator Bob Kerrey who had to think long and hard and decided to support that.

I wonder if my friend remembers because I just looked up some of the comments made by the Republicans. I read into the RECORD one of them by Trent Lott. He said: We have not been involved in this. This is going to be a disaster. This is awful. They said: No.

I wonder if my friend knows about the Clinton economic record: 23 million new jobs created during the 8 years of the Clinton Presidency; the largest surplus in history was left behind by President Clinton, over \$230 billion; unemployment rates were the lowest in three decades; there was the lowest overall poverty and child poverty rate since the 1970s.

Does my friend remember that battle and how we Democrats had to do it all by ourselves?

Mr. DURBIN. I remember it well because I was serving in the House at the time. When we called the Clinton plan to try to reduce the deficit and invigorate the economy, we did not have a single Republican who supported us. When it came to the Senate, it passed because Vice President Gore cast the deciding vote so it could go forward. That is the reality. There were many skeptics. You mentioned Senator Lott. There were others who said: This isn't going to work. The best thing to do is nothing. Sadly, they were wrong. They should have known they were wrong. We ended up seeing a surge in economic growth, the likes of which we have not seen in modern times.

I think right now we are in a slightly different situation because we are not talking about a big economic surge. We need to stabilize the economy. That is the key. I am afraid many of the people who are criticizing President Obama's efforts are not in touch with what is going on at home.

I watched this morning, as I am sure the Senator from California did, as President Obama went to Ft. Myers, FL, and talked to two particular people. One was Henrietta Hughes, who said: I am living in my car. I am a homeless person. What I wouldn't give to have my own kitchen and bathroom. Can you help me?

Sadly, a lot of people are homeless today. The President reached out, embraced her, and said: We will do what we can. Someone in the community stepped forward.

Another fellow said: I have been at McDonald's for 4 years. McDonald's is a

great Illinois corporation, but the fact is, he wants benefits. He wants improvement in wages. You see a lot of people struggling and falling behind. If we don't stabilize this economy, that group is going to grow—people losing their homes, people in jobs that don't even sustain them.

What we are doing is a leap of faith. We are saying: We believe in this President. We believe in this last election where the people said they wanted change. We are going to stick with this President and move forward. We hope some Republicans will join us this time.

Mrs. BOXER. I think my friend is so eloquent as usual. The point I am trying to make is, we faced a serious economic problem in 1993, when a Democratic President took over. You are right. Things are way worse, and it is a different circumstance. But the same thing happened then. We had Senate leadership, Senator Lott saying, on August 6, 1993: This is a pork alert, pork alert. It is 1,800 pages. We are talking about big sums. He said: We have to concentrate on spending cuts first.

They predicted gloom and doom. What happened was the greatest economic recovery in modern history because we took a chance. We followed the wisdom of many economists at the time. We know now that if the Republicans would just join with us, we can get this economy moving in the right direction. A trillion dollars has been taken out of the economy due to lost productivity. Who is going to put it back? The banks won't. We are the only ones who can put it back. It is not going to be a trillion. It is probably under \$800 billion. But it is the way to go forward.

I agree with my friend. I am so glad President Obama is out there. Doesn't he agree—and this is my last question. Then I will do a presentation about what is happening in my State—that it is important for the President to get out there, not to a group of people who have been prescreened, who are all his admirers, but actually to get there with all these people who are troubled? They are worried. They have hope and faith, but they are scared. It gives him a reality check rather than listening to what goes on around here because I am afraid the GOP, the Grand Old Party, has turned into the same old party, the same old negativity we heard in 1993 when we had another Democratic President get us on the right road to an amazing recovery. It is sort of the same old thing.

I wonder how my friend feels about our President getting out among the people.

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from California knows the President, before he was elected, was my colleague for 4 years in the Senate. Every Thursday morning at 8:30, then-Senator Obama and I would get together for a town meeting which we opened to people who came to Washington. Originally, it was for people from Illinois who came

to Washington. Then when I saw the crowds growing with my colleague, Senator Obama, I suggested those who wish they were from Illinois or just those who want to see Barack Obama. We would have a huge room full of people. Many of them were fans and admirers. But I watched Senator Obama field questions then.

During the campaign I saw the same thing. This is risky business about which politicians are warned: Don't walk into that crowd that has not been prescreened because they are going to throw you curve balls. They will criticize you. It could get tough and out of hand. Be ready.

He is ready because he has been tested. He was tested as a Senator, certainly tested 2 years on the campaign trail. It is downright refreshing that he walks in and has somebody hold up their hand and he doesn't know what is coming. This could be a person who would never consider voting for him, a person who disagrees with him completely, and he is prepared to hear that. That is a refreshing change in American politics. I hope he sticks with it. I think he will.

The fact that he is going to communities that are suffering—whether it is Elkhart, IN, or Ft. Myers, FL—he is doing his best, as Presidents are generally isolated in the White House and away from most of the people, to get back in touch. I hope our colleagues will do the same, whether they go to New York or California or Illinois or Florida. Go out and talk to the folks.

In my hometown of Springfield, my wife came in Sunday and said: I was just driving down South Grand Avenue, and there was a young woman standing there with a sign saying: I am out of work. Can you help me feed my family?

This was in my hometown. That is an eye opener. There are people like that. But she was so desperate she stood out by the side of the road asking for help. That is happening.

We have to do something about it. The answer is not to ignore it. The answer is not to do nothing. The answer is to do our level best to find a solution so we can have our best efforts, working together to find a way, an accountable way, to get the economy moving again.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. BOXER. What is the order now? The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is conducting morning business, and the Senator is authorized to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I want to pick up on where I left off. This is the same old, same old fight again. I looked back for some more quotes on the Clinton economic plan which led to 23 million new jobs, the longest period of peacetime economic expansion in American history. I read what Senator Lott from the other side said about it.

Here are other Senators: We are going to pile up more debt. We are

going to cost jobs. That was Senator Conrad Burns.

What happened? We went into surplus, and we created 23 million new jobs.

ORRIN HATCH:

Make no mistake, these higher rates will cost jobs.

That was because there were some tax hikes on the wealthiest few. It went on and on.

This is Phil Gramm, the guru of the other side:

I want to predict here tonight that if we adopt this bill the American economy is going to get weaker and not stronger, the deficit four years from today will be higher than it is today and not lower. . . .

He was wrong. This is no longer an academic debate. The Republicans, in 1993, said the same things about the Clinton plan they are saying about the Obama plan.

Phil Gramm again:

I believe that hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs as a result of this program. I believe that Bill Clinton will be one of those people.

Well, Bill Clinton got reelected. Twenty-three million new jobs were created. He left behind the largest surplus in history. Unemployment rates were the lowest in three decades. We had the lowest overall poverty and child poverty rates since the 1970s.

CHARLES GRASSLEY, my colleague:

I really do not think it takes a rocket scientist to know this bill will cost jobs.

That is what he said of the Clinton plan that created 23 million new jobs.

Connie Mack from Florida, from the other side of the aisle:

This bill will cost America jobs, no doubt about it.

Senator William Roth, from the other side:

It will flatten the economy. I am concerned about what it will do to our families. . . .

Well, what did it do to our families? The Clinton plan, with the Democratic support, created 23 million new jobs, left behind the highest surplus in history, unemployment rates were the lowest in three decades, and we had the longest peacetime expansion of economic expansion in history.

Rick Santorum, from the other side of the aisle:

. . . bad policy. Let's do something that creates jobs that doesn't feed the monster of government.

It goes on and on, and later today I will read some more into the RECORD.

So as I was listening to the debate yesterday and the day before and the day before—it has been good—I had a sense of *deja vu*. I heard this before. I turned to my staff and I said: Can you go and find out what the Republicans said about Bill Clinton's economic plan that was so successful? We did not get one Republican vote. Thank God we are getting three Republican votes for this plan because they have set a 60-vote filibuster-proof vote. That is what we need, which is a shame, but that is the way it is.

So what I would like to do today, again, is make the point that Republicans and Democrats have a philosophical disagreement. They had it back in 1993. We tested who was right and who was wrong. We put in the Clinton plan. We got a great economic recovery. We got surpluses as far as the eye could see. We had the debt going totally down.

When the Republicans took over, the deficits soared, the debt doubled, and we have now on the backs of the American people—every man, woman, and child—\$17,000 more in debt as a result of an open checkbook for Iraq and tax cuts to the millionaires and the billionaires who never needed it anyway. That is a fact. It has been proven. There is no debate over it.

I have what the Republicans said back then, and I know what happened to the economy. So if you are looking for past history to guide what we do today, it is time to step to the plate and support President Obama. He has learned from history. He has looked at what happened. He understands.

So I want to take us now to where we are in this recession: 3.6 million jobs lost since the beginning of the recession. I want people to think about 3,600,000 people. Think about your own community, how many people live in that community. Think about your own State, how many people live in that State. Think about what it means to have these many people unemployed, and think about what it means for their families, for their spouses, for their children, in the face of this. Doing nothing is not a passive act. It is a hostile act. It is a hostile act because doing nothing says: We like the status quo. We don't care about this. Let it just play out. I say that is unacceptable.

Now, we can look at what is happening month by month: almost 600,000 jobs lost in January; 524,000 in December; 533,000 in November. This is what is happening on the ground today.

The other day, I placed into the RECORD some of the layoffs that are going on in my State—everything from Macy's, to Starbucks, to little mom-and-pops, to big companies, to high-tech, all over California. We have 37 million people, and, as they say in California, when we get a cold, everybody else sneezes because we have such an impact. We would be about the seventh largest economy in the world.

This is another bad picture, I show you in the Chamber—unemployment rates rising: 6.7 percent in November; December, 7.2 percent; January, 7.6 percent. In my home State, it is now 9.3 percent unemployment. And there are some communities that have 15 percent unemployment. That is getting closer to a depression.

We have a problem, and we cannot afford stall tactics around here and 60-vote supermajorities. We cannot afford partisanship. We need cooperation because the longer we wait to put those dollars into our communities, the more job losses we are going to see.

Total unemployed Americans: 11.6 million. That is unemployed Americans at the time. Think about that. Think about your community. Think about your State. Think about what 11.6 million unemployed Americans means. There are 1.6 million unemployed Californians. The number of long-term unemployed—they have been looking and looking and cannot find work—is 2.6 million.

By the way, there are 7.8 million underemployed Americans, meaning people who get part-time work who want full-time work—so many people who have higher skills that are not being put to good use. Underemployment is a problem. It is a serious problem.

They say pictures speak a thousand words. I show you a picture of a homeless man in Bakersfield. My local officials in Bakersfield, CA, have noticed a rise in the number of homeless individuals. These are individuals without shelter. As shown in this picture, here is one hiding his face—hiding his face. It is a sad thing, and we are seeing more of it across our Nation.

Job seekers in search of employment at a Goodwill Industries career center in Los Angeles. A Los Angeles man who lost his job at a computer disposal facility was forced to place his children into foster care. Imagine all of us having to place our children into foster care because we could not find another job to support our family. He said: You've got to stay positive, but the economy is failing. I'll take anything.

He visited this Los Angeles Goodwill career center to learn about job opportunities.

The other day, I held up a picture from Florida where thousands of people came for 35 firefighter jobs, and they had to have the police come out, not that anyone was acting out, but they just needed order—for 35 firefighter jobs.

In Fresno, kids are having a good time, but where are they having a good time? In a pool at a home that has been foreclosed upon. They are creating backyard skateboard arenas. The skaters found the addresses of foreclosed homes on the Internet or through friends who work in real estate, and these young people came there to this foreclosed home. This home was once teeming with a family. Your home is your castle. It is a dream being lost.

If we do not pass this first leg of our economic recovery package, this will continue. Because it is one thing to lose your home because your interest rate got out of reach—that is a terrible thing—it is worse when you lose your home because you lost your job. So this is not a good picture.

This is an area in our State that was ready for development in the city of Rio Vista in eastern Solano County. The city of Rio Vista is nearing bankruptcy, its problems coming from plummeting property and sales taxes, a lack of funds coming from the State. The city has laid off employees. They have left open full-time positions. They

have frozen salaries. They have cut city programs. And they have closed city hall 1 day a week. This is a small city, and the reverberations are many.

The San Fernando Valley Career Center—this is a picture of a gentleman who is desperately looking for work. This is what he says: I don't have a single cent in my pocket.

He has been unemployed since September. He visited this career center to seek job opportunities. People are trying desperately to find work.

It is easy to stand up here and say: I don't like the bill. I don't like page 47. I don't like paragraph 2 and paragraph 8. The bottom line is, you can either have the perfect bill, no bill, or the compromise. Again, yesterday we passed the compromise, and we need to get this done.

This breaks my heart. I know all of us feel this way when we see our constituents who are hard workers, who cherish work, who want the pride of a job, having this circumstance.

There is a story from North Hollywood: a mother of five laid off in November 2007, spending hours each day looking for work. She said: This is the longest I've been unemployed. I feel stressed out. I have bills piling up.

So we are at the crossroads. President Obama is getting out to this country. He is going to places like this, where people are desperate. This is “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We are not going to live up to that ideal if we do not act now.

My friends on the other side of the aisle, believe me, they had their turn. They had 8 years of their turn. They took a surplus, they turned it into deficit. They took debt that was on the way out and expanded it by double, laying on the backs of every man, woman, and child another \$17,000 of debt. They had their chance. This is the worst economy we have seen since the Great Depression. They had their chance. They had an open checkbook for Iraq and they had an open checkbook for their very wealthy friends, and it did not work.

When we were in charge—we are not perfect, God knows, that is for sure—we got this economy back on track. We know what it takes. We have to stimulate this economy. That is the first leg. When it gets on its feet, we will wrap our hands around these deficits and get them under control. We will make sure our financial system has sensible regulation again so people have confidence in it. We know what we are doing.

It is true that the problems are vast, but this country did go through the Great Depression. And what did we see? When we put people to work, it restored their faith and confidence. When we mobilized for a war, we mobilized the productivity of people. We do not want to mobilize for war now, but we do want to mobilize for energy independence by turning to clean energy and creating technologies we can export. We know we have to take care of

the housing crisis. We know we have to get ahead of it. We know we have to help people stay in their homes. This next tranche of the TARP funds that Timothy Geithner talked about—the money is already there—\$50 billion will be used for that, and I hope even more. So we know what we are doing.

We are not standing up here with a plan that, as President Obama said, is plucked out of the air. It is not plucked out of the air. He spoke to economists—Democratic economists, Republican economists, and those all over the map—and the vast majority say we need to stimulate this economy, get money to the cities, get money to the counties, get money to the States, get money to the private sector, rebuild our physical infrastructure, our highways, our bridges. These are things we need to do anyway—these are things we need to do anyway. We need to get funds to law enforcement so we are not laying off police officers but hiring them. We need to get funds to our schools so we are not laying off teachers, but we are hiring them. We need to have tax breaks in here to encourage investments in alternative clean energy so we can make our government buildings energy efficient. These are all things that save money, create jobs, and we have to do them anyway.

So as President Obama has said, we didn't expect this kind of an economic crisis, but it is upon us. It is upon us. Listen to my friends on the other side and go back to 1993. They are saying the same things. They were the party of “no” then; they are the party of “no” now. No, no, no, no, no; don't do it. It is not going to work; it is going to hurt the economy; it will lead to a recession; it will increase the debt. All the things they are saying now they said then. They always have a reason to say no.

I wish to close by saying to the three Republican colleagues of mine who came forward: Thank you again. I have said it before. It takes courage. It is hard to go against the caucus you sit in every day. It is hard. I have had to do it on a couple of things. It is very unpleasant. I remember being 1 of 11 people who went a different way on one occasion on a gay rights issue. It was very hard. I remember being 1 of 23 who voted against the Iraq war. It was popular then. It was very hard. I remember voting against the Medicare prescription drug benefit because I thought it would lead to major problems with people getting kicked off their insurance when they needed their medicines the most. It also stopped Medicare from negotiating. It didn't allow them to negotiate for lower prices, and I felt the pharmaceutical companies were going to make a bundle and the people wouldn't get the benefits. I was in the minority. So I know how it feels to be in the minority. I know how it feels to vote differently than most of your colleagues. It is a lonely feeling. I say to those Republican friends on the other side: You are showing courage and you

are showing wisdom. You are also showing you have learned from history, because you went back to the Clinton years where we didn't get one Republican vote for a bold economic plan. All the dire predictions turned out to be totally false.

We need to get back to those days of economic growth and expansion, but we can't do it until we move forward with this three-legged stool, this economic stimulus package to create jobs, jobs, jobs; the housing piece to address the terrible loss of confidence in housing, to help people stay in their homes and stop the slide; and, of course, the third piece of making sure our financial sector works once again, so that creditworthy people can step to the plate, go to the bank, and get a loan. It is very hard to do that.

I wish to point out one other piece of the package that is so important. The small businesses in our country will have some credit. This is very key. They will be able to go to the SBA and get this credit. So this is a package that is worthy of our support. It is far from perfect because, again, each of us could write the perfect bill, but that is not possible. Thank you to my Republican friends who have joined us.

I wish to say to the conferees: I understand the pressures they are under and I make a plea to them that within the confines of the numbers we sent over, I hope they can find the right path to take so that this bill coming out of conference is acceptable over here, we get the 60 votes, and we move forward. We have a lot of work to do.

Today I was on a TV show and it was so interesting because one of the experts on the show said, Well, wait a minute. You are talking about this economic stimulus. What about energy independence? What about health care? And he went on and on. What about exports? I thought after I got off the show: In 8 years we have developed all of these problems. We are not going to fix them in 24 hours. You have to have a list, as President Obama has, and tick them off one at a time, address these issues one at a time. The first issue is the stimulus. The second issue will be the financial sector, and then the housing sector. We are already talking about an energy bill that is going to come out pretty soon, which is going to be very exciting. These experts were saying we need a bold vision for America. I agree with them, but we can't fix what went wrong in 8 years in 24 hours. Give us a couple of months, at least, to get it on track and the effects of it will start being felt soon after that, but we can't do everything in 1 day.

So, yes, these experts are right. We have to do all of this, but we have to start at the beginning. The stimulus package is No. 1. We are almost there. When it comes back from conference, we will have another vote, and it will go to the President's desk, and then we will move forward with the rest of the economic recovery plan. I do believe in

my hearts of hearts—I have been around here a while—I do believe President Obama has learned from history. I do believe President Obama is a student of history, because if you are not a student of history you are going to repeat the mistakes of the past. I think he knows what works and I think he knows what doesn't work. So let's get behind him on this first initiative. Let's get it done. Then we will attack each and every problem, because there are many we have on our plate, but we will deal with them. I am confident—this is America—we will be stronger at the end of the day.

Thank you very much, Madam President. I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, we have made some difficult decisions over the past few months. After years of failed policies that have dragged our economy into the ditch, we still have many more difficult decisions ahead.

The next big decision will be for Republicans and Democrats working together on a final version of the jobs bill. Now we have an opportunity to focus on a bill that will rebuild our economy from the ground up by putting Americans back to work right now.

The jobs bill we passed yesterday creates jobs—up to 4 million of them—and saves many more by investing in our roads, bridges, water systems, energy facilities, and our schools.

This is long-term infrastructure that will support our economy for generations to come. The jobs bill also invests in what matters—people. It invests in health care and an education, puts cops on the street.

Where I come from, we call things as we see them. The word “stimulus” is a Washington, DC, word that doesn't mean much in my book. That is why, from day one, I have called this the jobs bill because that is exactly what it is.

You are either for jobs or you are against jobs. Every day, we hear of layoffs by the tens of thousands.

Unemployment numbers are skyrocketing. Businesses—and even entire industries—are being forced to call it quits.

The national housing slump is taking its toll on Montana's timber industry. The Columbia Falls Aluminum Company is at risk of closing its doors after decades of being a major driver of the economy in Flathead Valley. The Stillwater Mine has laid off hundreds of its employees.

Montana's unemployment rate jumped from 4.9 percent in December

to 5.4 percent last month. That is an increase, in 1 month, of a half percent.

The numbers are grim, and they are real. Now is the time for Congress to vote for jobs.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. This picture is worth much more than that. It is a picture that I came across in the Whitefish Pilot the other day. It was taken by a guy named David Erickson.

The man in this picture is standing on a street corner in Whitefish, MT. He is holding a cardboard sign that says: Work needed. He is someone whom I represent in the Senate. He is one of the 950,000 Montanans whom I am proud to call my boss. His story is a story of millions of Americans right now—millions of Americans who either don't have a job or who went to work today wondering if it will be the last day on the job.

Millions of Americans are wondering how they are going to be able to continue to put food on the table for their families or pay their mortgage or pay for medicine or pay for childcare.

We are not talking about a few folks who drew a short stick. We are talking about millions of Americans who are in the same boat as this guy in the picture—folks who are paying a tough price for the failed economic policies of the past.

Some DC politicians say we don't need to pass a jobs bill because the current recession is only temporary. I ask you to tell that to the guy standing on the street in Whitefish, MT, or to the unemployed woman who wrote me to say she is willing to sweep the streets with a broom if we will give her a job.

These are proud folks. They don't want unemployment checks; they want paychecks. Right now, work is needed. That is the task ahead for my friends in the House and Senate who are working on the final version of the jobs bill.

We need jobs, jobs, and more jobs. We don't need politics as usual. Now is not the time for Congress to be against jobs. It is the time for Congress to work together to put folks back to work by investing in America.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent under morning business to use such time as I may consume.

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

STIMULUS PACKAGE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we have an opportunity in the next day or

two to do something extremely significant to create jobs in this country, to help rebuild the middle class of this country, and to help rebuild confidence in the economy and to turn things around in America. I am anxious to do that, and I know our leadership is working very hard at this moment.

I thank Senator REID and everyone involved in this effort, the Speaker, and I thank our colleagues who have worked across the aisle with us to be able to address what is the most serious economic crisis certainly since the Great Depression. We have seen numbers of jobs lost that only rival back to 1945.

In the morning I had the opportunity to chair a meeting with business leaders from around the country in every part of the economy, from retail sales to restaurants to manufacturing to homebuilders, realtors, the health care industry and information technology. One thing came through loudly and clearly.

First, they are optimistic about America. They want to say we can get through this. But there is a sense that we have to move boldly and we have to get something done to turn things around. That is what this economic recovery package is all about.

We know the numbers. Certainly I know the numbers in Michigan. My constituents, the families of Michigan, understand the numbers of what has been happening to people in my State and across the country. But we have seen since December of 2007 over 3.6 million jobs lost.

It is my understanding now we have more people looking for work than there are available jobs. As a result of policies, of actions and inaction in the last 8 years, we now see over 11.7 million workers without a job. They want to work. People want to work. They work hard. People in my State right now are working hard if they are working. They may be working one job, two jobs, three part-time jobs to try to hold it together. But they want to work. We have seen the set of economic policies and inaction for too long that has created this horrible economic tsunami for too many people in this country.

In my home State, unemployment is 10.6 percent, the highest in 25 years. That is only the people we count. It does not count the people who have been unemployed so long that they are no longer involved in the numbers.

The people of Michigan want to work. They want jobs. They want to be able to pay their house payment, be able to put food on the table, be able to have their small business be successful, be able to manufacture and make things in Michigan for this country and be a part of a vibrant middle class, which has been so wonderful about our country. That is what this economic recovery package is all about. We don't want to see these numbers, 3.6 million lost jobs.

This is a picture from Miami. It is a little bit warmer in Miami than it is in