

deserve serious efforts by serious legislators to develop serious solutions.

Unfortunately, much of what we have seen from the other side is simply one radical distraction after the next. For months, Republicans have perpetuated a pollster- and consultant-created myth that our plan and our goal is to have the government run your health care. It is not. Let me repeat: It is not. In fact, one of our core principles is that if you like the health care you have, you can keep it. But the other side simply won't let the facts get in the way of a good story.

A Republican Congressman recently claimed that our plan to improve health care would "put seniors in a position of being put to death by their government."

A Republican Senator made a similar statement to mislead his constituents. He actually accused Democrats of proposing a plan that would kill Americans. It is hard to imagine that. Rather than having a serious and real debate about a serious and real crisis, some Senators and Congressmen want the American people to believe their colleagues are proposing a plan to kill them.

These distortions and distractions are revolting, and they are not limited to health care.

An artificial controversy is getting far too much attention lately—one that ignores the undeniable and proven fact that President Obama was born in the United States of America. Last week, one of the Republican leaders in the House of Representatives continued to give this false and misleading claim credence. Let's be clear: It is a phony issue that does not deserve even a minute of our attention on the floor of the Senate. It is absurd, irresponsible, and baseless, and the false claims have long ago been refuted.

The American people have every right to expect we will solve real problems before creating fake problems. They should know that rather than helping them get ahead, some of our colleagues would rather spew ludicrous conspiracy theories.

The other side hasn't stopped at fake arguments and fake issues. We also have seen them resort to fake letters. Some Members of Congress have recently received forged letters purporting to be from the NAACP. Others have received a similar letter signed by a fake name with a fake job title purporting to be from a local Hispanic group. The bogus letters have been tracked back to employees of a Republican lobbying firm. This behavior is sick, it is shameful, it is dishonest, and it is undemocratic.

When we passed the economic recovery plan this winter, some opposed it. They didn't believe we needed an aggressive plan in response to a grave crisis that now is putting people back to work, ensuring middle-class families can get ahead, and investing in our future. But objecting to that legislation is their right. As we start to see a re-

turn on our investment, many of those who tried to block this bill have since sought credit for the good it is doing. Others who opposed the plan outright—those who wish we weren't investing in their States and districts—now complain they wish to see us invest more quickly. Well, you can't have it both ways. It is yet another embarrassing example of misinformation and misrepresentation upon which some on the other side tend to rely.

I cannot blame people for wondering why, with an issue as important as health care now before us, bipartisan consensus sometimes seems so elusive. So I say to them: This extreme brand of strategy and the extreme tactics that come with it are what we have to contend with.

First, Rush Limbaugh happily admitted he wants our President to fail. Then a Republican Senator openly admitted he wants to block the health insurance reform for millions as a way to "break the President." Another Republican Senator admitted that at least half of the other side's opposition to reform is purely political. And an influential commentator advised Republicans to avoid consensus at all costs and instead "go for the kill."

These partisan tactics have consequences. These consequences will be evident at any kitchen table, in every family budget, and every American's peace of mind.

And they are watching. A poll released last week found that a majority of Americans credit President Obama with putting partisanship aside and trying to work with congressional Republicans to get this done for the good of the country. Republicans, they found, weren't returning the favor.

Others may be focused on delaying and denying health insurance reform, but we will make sure we don't let that happen. We already have seen what happens when we do nothing. The costs of sitting this one out are far too high and not acting is not an option.

The American people appreciate those Republicans who have come to the negotiating table in good faith. I am sorry to say that there simply aren't enough of them. At this stage, out of 100 Senators, we have 3 Republicans who are willing to work with us on health care. I am very happy to have them, but I wish we had more.

Rather than having a serious and real debate about a serious and real crisis, some would prefer to deploy tactics to scare the American people. But what scares the American people is that under the status quo, they live just one illness, one accident, or one pink slip away from losing everything.

This is no time to let partisanship get the best of us. This is no time to obsess over fake controversies or oppose ideas simply because they were proposed by people who sit on the other side of this Chamber. This is no time to instill unfounded fears and incite the hope that our Nation's leaders fail. This is the time to get serious about

making it easier for American citizens to afford to live a healthy life.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the distinguished Senator from Alaska, Mr. BEGICH, controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the final 30 minutes.

The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

Mr. BEGICH. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. BEGICH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1560, S. 1561, S. 1562, S. 1563, S. 1564, and S. 1565 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

LU YOUNG

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, before yielding the floor, I wish to mark the passing of a great Alaskan—Lu Young, the wife of Alaska's long-time Congressman DON YOUNG.

Lu passed away suddenly over the weekend. Lu was an Alaskan of true distinction. I am proud to have shared a friendship with her for several decades.

Our State is better because of her service and many contributions. The thoughts and prayers of Alaskans and me are with Representative YOUNG and his family.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska.

SENATOR BEGICH'S MAIDEN SPEECH

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to congratulate my colleague from Alaska, Senator BEGICH, and recognize his maiden speech on the Senate floor. The tradition of giving a maiden speech is one that perhaps in recent years has not been followed as intently as it has in days gone past. Senator BEGICH has highlighted with his remarks today and with the collection of bills he has introduced on the Senate floor—the significance of America's role as an Arctic nation and the key that Alaska holds as a leader in that responsibility.

I appreciate what he is doing to shine a spotlight on these issues, whether it is how we deal with the impact of climate change, whether it is how we deal with the health consequences, how we

dealt with renewed and increased commerce in an Arctic that is potentially ice free.

I applaud him for his efforts and, again, shining the light on this issue. It seems every day the rest of the country, the rest of the world, is looking to the Arctic for our science, looking to the Arctic for the knowledge of our elders and researchers, and looking to the Arctic as a true leader in global environmental policies.

I applaud him, and I am privileged to be able to support him in so many of these efforts, working on the issues that are important to, of course, our State but to the Nation as a whole.

LU YOUNG

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, my colleague mentioned the passing of a very dear friend. I wish to take a moment this afternoon to also acknowledge the passing of Lu Young.

This is a sad day for us in Alaska as we come to grips with the very sudden passing of Congressman YOUNG's wife. They have been a team for some 46 years. She died this weekend at their home in Great Falls, VA. She was only 67 years old.

Lu Young was an Athabascan Indian from the village of Fort Yukon. Fort Yukon, you may have seen on Senator BEGICH's map, is in the interior part of the State. It sits 7 miles above the Arctic Circle on the north bank of the Yukon River. It is about 145 air miles north from Fairbanks.

Congressman YOUNG met Lu in Fort Yukon. This is back in the days when he was a tugboat captain operating a barge, carrying products and supplies up and down the river. DON taught in the wintertime at the BIA schools. Lu was the bookkeeper there in the village. They met, they married, and had 46 years of honest wedded bliss.

I have to tell you, it is not often one can look at a couple after 46 years of marriage and still see the love and the gleam and the warmth between two individuals, one for another. Every day we saw that. If Lu wasn't with DON, DON was talking about Lu.

He used to joke when he was in his campaigns: "You get two for the price of one." He wasn't kidding. DON was in his office every day, and Lu was also in the office every day over at the Rayburn Building. She would greet Alaskans as they would come in. She would make sure they were comfortable or if she thought they were taking too much of DON's time, she would tell them that too. She would take people over to the restaurant for lunch. She welcomed Alaskans as part of their family.

We have a very close and intimate relationship with those we represent in Alaska. As my new colleague is recognizing, we are a long way from home, so we kind of band together. We are part of an extended family.

Lu was a constant in DON YOUNG's office. She ensured that Alaskans who traveled to Washington, DC, would

know that the Congressman for all Alaska was going to take care of you. She was also reminding DON every day: Don't forget where you come from. Anyone who has ever been to DON's office knows it looks and feels very much like Alaska. Lu made sure that was never going to change.

Today the people of Alaska are not thinking of Lu's contributions to DON's political career. They are reflecting on the truly remarkable love between the two of them. In a statement this morning, Congressman YOUNG summed it up. He said: "Lu was my everything, and I am heartbroken." That loss breaks the golden hearts of all Alaskans as we remember our own experiences with Congressman YOUNG's partner, his best friend, and his heart.

Congressman YOUNG has lost the love of his life, and Alaskans have lost a great friend. Regardless of political persuasion, all of Alaska grieves with Congressman YOUNG, his daughters, Joni and Dawn, and their husbands, 14 grandchildren, and an extended family of lifelong friends throughout the great land.

I yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, of course, all of us extend our sympathies to Congressman YOUNG and his family. The remarks of the Senators from Alaska spoke for all of us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, how much time is remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There is 23½ minutes remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Will the Chair please let me know when 10 minutes remain?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Yes.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator KYL and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy during our time.

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

MIDDLE-CLASS TAX INCREASE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, a few minutes ago, I was waiting to give a television interview with MSNBC. The White House press secretary, Robert Gibbs, was on. He said a most astonishing thing. He was there, obviously, for the purpose of an impromptu press conference to correct what I thought was a truthful impression left yesterday by two members of the Obama administration. Both Mr. Summers and Mr. Geithner yesterday did not rule out the possibility of a middle-income tax increase. That was widely reported all over the country today. Apparently, they were taken to the woodshed this morning, and Mr. Gibbs was sent out to say: Oh, no, we are not going to raise taxes on middle income Americans.

But that is misleading, at best, to the American people. Most people know that. An article in the New York Times on August 1, was titled: "Obama's Pledge to Tax Only the Rich Can't Pay for Everything, Analysts Say."

Among those quoted is Leonard Burman, "a veteran of the Clinton administration Treasury and director of the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center."

"This idea," he says, "that everything new that government provides ought to be paid for by the top 5 percent, that's a basically unstable way of governing."

I am sure the Senator from Arizona remembers Isabel Sawhill's distinguished service. She had some comments on tax increases as well. "There is no way we can pay for health care and the rest of the Obama agenda, plus get our long-term deficits under control, simply by raising taxes on the wealthy," said Isabel V. Sawhill, a former Clinton administration budget official. "The middle class is going to have to contribute as well."

I wonder if the Senator from Arizona, who is a veteran member of the Finance Committee, is surprised to see, first, the two top finance people for the Obama administration say we are not going to rule out a middle-class tax increase, and then all of a sudden today, the Obama administration says no, nope, we are going to rule that out again. What is going on?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I say to my colleague, I had the same impression yesterday when I saw Mr. Geithner and Mr. Summers on television. They, frankly, were recognizing the reality of the situation. I did not think that much of it because the truth is, the people my colleague has quoted are absolutely right. You cannot do all the things the President wants to do without raising taxes, and inevitably that will be on the middle class.

To put in the RECORD what both Treasury Secretary Geithner and Mr. Summers said—this is as reported by George Stephanopoulos, "This Week" host for ABC. He said:

To get the economy back on track, will President Obama have to break his pledge not to raise taxes on 95 percent of Americans? In a "This Week" exclusive, Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner told me, "We're going to have to do what's necessary." Then Stephanopoulos continues:

When I gave him several opportunities to rule out a middle-class tax hike, he wouldn't do it. "We have to bring these deficits down very dramatically," Geithner told me. "And that's going to require some very hard choices."

Of course it is. Secretary Geithner is right. It is pretty hard to deny.

Then the National Economic Council Director, Lawrence Summers, was asked by Bob Schieffer on CBS if taxes could be raised for middle-income Americans. Summers said:

There is a lot that can happen over time. It is never a good idea to absolutely rule out things no matter what.

Then he said that what the President has been completely clear on is he is