

bill will curb the excesses that cost so many Americans their jobs and homes and businesses in the financial crisis.

History also will mark Senator DODD's key role in passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a landmark step in the decades-long fight to ensure that every American has access to affordable health care. Taking up the baton for his dear friend, Senator Kennedy, Senator DODD provided strong and sure leadership, again in the face of obstacles that at times threatened the bill's very survival. Thanks to his dedication, health coverage is more secure and affordable for families who have it, and more accessible to families without it.

If Senator DODD had accomplished no other legislative victories than these two, he could rightly claim a place among the Senate's most effective legislators. But CHRIS DODD accomplished much more.

Millions of American families have benefitted from his work in enacting the Family and Medical Leave Act. Before this legislation became law in 1993, Americans faced wrenching choices between their responsibilities at home and at work. Despite two Presidential vetoes, Senator DODD continued fighting until he had succeeded. And today, American workers are able to give their families the time and attention they need without fear of losing their job.

Families and children have been at the heart of much of his work. The child care and development block grant program, which he fought to establish, has helped millions of low-income families get the child care they so desperately needed. The Head Start program has been a career-long priority, and his hard work to ensure that Head Start remains strong has made a huge difference in countless lives.

His work on behalf of families extends to protecting them from predatory credit card companies. I worked closely with him in the fight for passage of the Credit Card Accountability and Disclosure Act, which provided tough new protections against unfair practices in the credit card industry.

Part of the reason for CHRIS DODD's extraordinarily successful legislative career is that people simply like working with him. He is good-natured, open and non-defensive, willing to listen to differing points of view. His openness is accompanied by an infectious sense of humor that has eased tense moments and helped us all take ourselves a little less seriously, which in turn has helped overcome some mighty serious impasses.

A common thread runs through all his signature accomplishments. Throughout his career, CHRIS DODD has been dedicated to the idea that compassion has a place in this chamber; that as we do our work, we should keep in mind that real families, with real problems, are looking to us for solutions; and that a Senator, with hard work and resourcefulness and team-

work, can make a difference in the lives of those families.

As CHRIS DODD's Senate career draws to a close, speeches will be given, portraits will be hung, someday statues will be raised, but the ultimate monument to his Senate career will be the mother or father who has time to care for a sick child because of the Family and Medical Leave Act. It will be the parent who doesn't have to choose between putting food on the table or providing health insurance for his children. It will be the child who excels in the classroom because of Head Start. The monuments to CHRIS DODD will be the millions of Americans whose lives are safer, more secure and more prosperous because of the work he has done here. No Senator could ask for more meaningful tributes. I will miss his wisdom and his humor as we conduct business here, but I will continue to value his friendship. I wish him and his wonderful family the happiest of times in all the years to come.

RUSS FEINGOLD

Mr. President, true bipartisanship has been in sadly short supply in this Chamber recently. Sadly, at the end of this Congress, the supply of bipartisanship will be a little lower, because we will no longer have the benefit of RUSS FEINGOLD's presence in the Senate.

Senator FEINGOLD's service to the Senate demonstrates that one need not abandon strongly held convictions to reach bipartisan solutions. His example proves that disagreeing with someone on one issue need not prevent working with them on another issue. He has shown that one can act as a good steward of taxpayer dollars and a careful advocate for fiscal responsibility without leaving behind the working families who need us to stand up for them.

There are many examples of Senator FEINGOLD's search for bipartisan solutions, but justifiably, he is best known for the McCain-Feingold campaign finance legislation. The assault on this legislation in the courts should not distract us from its wisdom. This bipartisan legislation was based upon the inherently American and inherently democratic notion that elections should be decided by the will of the people, and not because of the influence of wealthy donors or moneyed interests. This is a notion that is not Republican or Democratic, not liberal or conservative. It relies not on party loyalty or ideological fervor, but on a sense of justice. That sense of justice is central to what Russ Feingold has brought to the Senate.

Likewise, the civil rights of American citizens are not a matter of party or ideology. I admire Senator FEINGOLD's unflagging commitment to those rights, and his efforts to find a reasonable balance between protecting our safety and preserving our freedom.

Now, Senator FEINGOLD and I have not agreed on every issue. While we both believed the Iraq war was a mistake, he believed we should respond by ending funding for the war. I disagreed,

and believed that such a move would harm our troops in the field whom we should support. But I never doubted that Senator FEINGOLD came to his conclusions only after giving careful consideration to the arguments opposing them.

We will miss RUSS FEINGOLD, miss his intellect, his independence, and his dedication. I will always call him my friend. The Senate will be poorer for his absence. But I know that the Nation will continue to enjoy the benefits of his service.

MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this week, with little fanfare, we completed work on an important bill, through a bipartisan process, by passage of S. 3984, the Museum and Library Services Act of 2010.

This bill updates museum and library services funded through the Institute for Museum and Library Services, IMLS, to better meet the needs of Americans of all ages and in all types of locations.

The Museum and Library Services Act represents our national commitment to the institutions that are essential to building strong and vibrant communities. Through a relatively modest federal investment, this law helps build capacity to support and expand access to library and museum services at the State and local level.

We were able to complete this legislation because we worked together—across the aisle and across the Capitol, and with the input of the museum and library community.

I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank our HELP Committee Chairman TOM HARKIN, Ranking Member MIKE ENZI, and Senator RICHARD BURR for working with me to craft this bipartisan legislation. I would also like to recognize our cosponsors, Senators COCHRAN, COLLINS, and TESTER. In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to House Education and Labor Committee Chairman GEORGE MILLER and Ranking Member JOHN KLINE for quickly guiding this bill through the House.

No piece of legislation can be enacted without the diligent work of dedicated staff. I would like to thank Kristin Romero and Margaret Bomba of the office of legislative counsel who worked with us to draft the bill. I would also like to recognize the efforts of staff: Thomas Showalter, Pam Smith, and Bethany Little with Chairman HARKIN; Beth Buehlmann and Kelly Hastings with Senator ENZI; Celia Sims with Senator BURR; Lory Yudin with the HELP Committee; and in my office, Elyse Wasch, Moira Lenehan-Razzuri, Andrew Odgren, and Jason Kanter.

Additionally, all of us who worked on this bill appreciate the technical assistance and feedback we received from the staff of IMLS. Finally, I would like

to commend the American Library Association and the American Association of Museums for developing thoughtful recommendations and working with us to improve museum and library services across the Nation. I especially appreciate the wisdom and input I have received from the vibrant library and museum community in Rhode Island.

I look forward to this legislation being swiftly signed into law.

TRUCK WEIGHTS ON MAINE INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the continuing resolution, H.R. 3082.

My amendment will rectify an impediment to international commerce flowing through Maine, and protect Maine drivers and pedestrians. For the past year, Maine truckers have operated under a pilot program that allows trucks over 80,000 pounds to move from local roads to safer interstate routes, far from schools and homes. The pilot project has been a great success, and I seek to make it permanent.

Unless we take action before December 17, trucks over 80,000 pounds traveling to or from the Canadian border or within upstate Maine will be forced onto secondary roads, many of them two-lane roads, which run through towns and villages. Trucks traveling between Houlton and Hampden, ME, on these local roads will pass more than three thousand homes, several schools, and hundreds of intersections. Tanker trucks carrying fuel will again be traveling past elementary schools and libraries, and competing with local traffic. Not only is this an inefficient method of moving goods, but it also unnecessarily increases risks on narrow local roads.

What is the result of such truck traffic on local roads? According to a study conducted by the Maine Department of Transportation, traffic fatalities involving trucks weighing 100,000 pounds are 10 times greater on secondary roads in Maine than on exempted interstates. Serious injuries are seven times more likely. The past year's pilot program has proved that Maine's rural interstate is a safer place for large trucks.

Maine Department of Transportation officials strongly support this program. Extensive studies and infrastructure inspections have left State DOT officials confident that heavier trucks carrying interstate and international loads belong on the interstate.

I urge my colleagues to support this straightforward amendment.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to express my strong support for the tax legislation that will not only enable millions of American families to keep more of their paychecks, but will also provide a stable and predictable economic platform upon which American businesses can operate, and pull our economy from the economic morass of the past 2 years.

This legislation certainly cannot remedy all of our economic struggles, but it is essential that we provide necessary certainty in Federal tax policy, which is the foundation upon which our Nation's entrepreneurs make decisions about taking risks, investing in the future, and creating jobs. As the end-of-the-year deadline looms for the biggest tax increase in history, American employers have been retrenching and bracing for the possibility of Washington taking a larger share of taxes out of their businesses—and that is inhibiting our economic potential at a time when we can least afford to fetter the forces of our private sector.

Frankly, the debate over whether extending these tax provisions is the right thing to do is now past. What we are experiencing right now is a jobless recovery, which isn't a true recovery at all if you cannot find a job or earn a paycheck. For 2 years of debating and legislating in Washington about how to fix the economy, our economy should be in more than just the "holding pattern" Harvard Economics Professor, Martin Feldstein, has described. I am afraid that at this historic juncture—with the unemployment rate of 9.8 percent, or roughly 15 million people out of work, poverty in America is at its highest in over a generation, and we are experiencing historically low investor and consumer confidence—we do not have the luxury to take the gamble and increase taxes.

A consensus has developed among economists and policymakers that extending these tax provisions will benefit the economy. Indeed, according to the White House, extending these tax provisions will result in more than 1.5 million jobs. Back in September, Mark Zandi released data indicating that increasing taxes from 33 and 35 percent up to 36 and 39.6 percent on small business and high-income taxpayers would reduce gross domestic product by 0.4 percent in 2011 and would reduce payroll employment by 770,000 jobs by mid-2012, precipitating a double-dip recession in the first half of 2011. Mr. Zandi is now estimating that this legislation will create 1.6 million jobs. Further, even the Center for American Progress estimates job growth at 2.2 million jobs as a result of this legislation.

The Congressional Budget Office has been stating since September that extending the tax rates through 2012, as this legislation would do, would add between 600,000 and 1.4 million jobs in 2011 and between 900,000 and 2.7 million jobs in 2012. Further, CBO estimates that this legislation would enhance the gross national product by 1.1 percent. Also back in September, a group of 300 economists recognized this reality and sent a letter to Congress imploring an extension of the current rules. Perhaps the phrase "better late than never" is most applicable to the impending passage of this legislation that will avert the tax increases that loom a mere 3 weeks away and would lead to a double-dip recession, and drive our unemployment rate even higher.

It is simply long past time that we extend the 2001/2003 tax relief and expiring provisions such as the R&D tax credit and the child credit. It is incumbent upon this Congress to enact stable tax rules that will help Americans to get back to work and plan their lives—our political Hippocratic Oath of "First Do No Harm" should apply at this moment, just as there are glimmers that our national economy is past its low ebb. At this juncture we cannot veer onto a dangerous path and increase taxes, which is exactly what would happen if this legislation does not become law. Indeed, the tax increases scheduled to take effect in a matter of 3 weeks would be the biggest tax increase in history—an \$800 billion tax increase that will be averted by this legislation.

And the agreement on which this legislation is based is something that has been rare in Washington in the last 2 years—a hard fought consensus among the leaders of both parties. Both sides of the negotiating table were required to make concessions to reach this point and, as a result, a significant majority of 83 to 15 voted to move this legislation forward.

Undeniably, one of the key components of this legislation is the 10-percent tax rate that was a hallmark of the original 2001 legislation. While other tax rates have been the object of more heated—and highly polarizing—debate, it is undeniable that this 10 percent rate is the most significant. If this legislation is not enacted into law, roughly 27 million tax returns will witness a 50 percent increase in taxes, from 10 percent to 15 percent. With consumer spending representing 70 percent of gross national product, we must be cognizant of how this tax increase would eradicate any sign of economic recovery. This is not even an issue of individuals bracing for a higher tax bill—on January 1 employers would withhold more taxes from paychecks leaving less for the rent, grocery bills, a tank of gas or utilities.

Of course, all taxpayers benefit from the initial 10-percent tax rate, but for these low-income individuals and families, having the 10-percent rate revert to a 15-percent rate would be particularly burdensome. For individuals making less than \$8,000 per year and couples making under \$16,000, this 10-percent rate is a lifeline. For taxpayers slightly higher up the income stream, having this initial portion of their income taxed at only a 10-percent rate can significantly help reduce their effective tax rate.

Another hallmark of the 2001 tax legislation that would be extended is marriage penalty relief. The initial two tax rates, those at 10 percent and 15 percent rates, allow for twice the amount of income for a married couple than is taxed for an individual, so individuals earning up to \$34,000 are taxed at 15 percent and couples can earn up to \$68,000 and still remain in the 15-percent bracket. This was certainly not