

I think, in addition to that, we should pass health care legislation. We do not know how that will happen in light of the new political realities here in Washington. But I think we need to do that as well.

But no matter what happened in the elections, no matter what happens on the issue of health care, job creation has to be the No. 1 priority, second to none, in terms of the work we do here in Washington.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this very brief wire service story about the unemployment situation in Pennsylvania.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

PA JOBLESS RATE UP, JOBS AT MOST SCARCE
IN DECADE

[From the Associated Press, Jan. 2010]

HARRISBURG, PA. (AP)—A new report says jobs in Pennsylvania were—harder to find in December than they have been in more than a decade.

The state Department of Labor and Industry said Thursday that statewide unemployment jumped to 8.9 percent last month.

The October rate also was 8.9 percent, the highest level in 25 years, before dipping to 8.5 percent in November.

The department says employers eliminated about 8,100 jobs in December, leaving Pennsylvania with fewer than 5.6 million jobs—the lowest level since September 1999.

The state's unemployment rate is below the national average of 10 percent. Among the 10 most populous states, only Texas' rate is lower.

Mr. CASEY. Let me conclude this part of my remarks by speaking for a couple minutes about what we have done in this past year: The Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known by—as many things are here—the acronym AARA, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Those two words in the middle are very important, the word “recovery” and the word “reinvestment” because that is the intended effect of that legislation. It was the right legislation—not perfect but the right legislation—at the right time at the beginning or the early months of 2009.

But there are a lot of Americans who believe it is not being implemented fast enough. The jump-starting effect of the spending, whether it is on infrastructure or energy efficiency or investments in education, investments in health care, tax cuts for 95 percent of the American people, which was in the recovery bill, that all of that is not moving fast enough.

So one of the jobs we have, in addition to new strategies on job creation, is to implement, at a faster pace, at a faster rate, the recovery bill. I also believe we should remind ourselves that the recovery bill was not a 10-month bill. We are in about the 10th month right now.

But the spending that will create the jump-start of a positive economic effect is supposed to take place over 2 and 3 years, depending on the program, depending upon the initiative. So one

of the things we have to do is push the recovery bill aggressively to make sure those investments, whether they are recovery, getting our economy out of the ditch, so to speak, and moving down the road or whether they are expenditures that relate to reinvestment, reinvestment in people skills, reinvestment in their opportunities to have higher education, reinvestment or investment, in some cases, in people's ability to recover from this recession, unemployment insurance, COBRA health insurance extensions, food stamps. All those are critically important to our recovery.

For those who say: Well, I do not like when we spend money on unemployment insurance or food stamps—we get that criticism from folks once in a while—they should understand there is no comparison, at least according to the economist Mark Zandi, there is no comparison between tax cuts for wealthy folks versus unemployment insurance, food stamps, and other strategies in terms of their positive impact on the economy.

By one measurement that Mark Zandi pointed to, bang for the buck, if you spend a buck on unemployment insurance or spend a buck on food stamps, you get a return above \$1.50, you get as high as \$1.60 to \$1.70 in return. You cannot say that, according to his analysis, with regard to some of the tax cut policies we have seen here.

So investments in vulnerable Americans who are trying to recover from the recession—food stamps and unemployment insurance being the two best examples—those investments actually have a return to the taxpayer as well.

So what do we need to do? We have to focus on job creation. When we focus on that legislation, it should have a couple component parts or elements. First of all, stabilizing that safety net for vulnerable Americans which I just spoke of. Secondly, supporting small business in a very direct and targeted way. Investing and investing more in infrastructure, including broadband infrastructure, which is another kind of knowledge infrastructure and, finally, building a clean energy economy. If we continue to do that, we will create jobs, we will keep our environment clean, we will reduce our dependence on foreign oil and literally make us more secure from a national security standpoint.

I think a major part of job creation, in the short term, has to be a job creation tax credit.

HAITIAN ORPHANS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, over the past week, we have witnessed the immense destruction that the earthquake in Haiti and its subsequent aftershocks have wrought on the Haitian people. Old and young, rich and poor, weak and strong, no matter who you are, this earthquake has brought heartache and sadness to numerous lives.

First, I want to send my condolences to the people of Haiti and their family

and friends around the world who lost loved ones in this tragedy. I also want to send my condolences to our brave men and women in the U.S. Embassy who also have lost loved ones, but who are continuing to help the people of Haiti and Americans in Haiti in the midst of this natural disaster. These individuals represent the very best of what America encompasses.

I am proud that as soon as this earthquake struck our southern neighbor, the U.S. Government as well as the American people galvanized their resources to ensure that resources were delivered for people who have lost everything.

Today, I come to the floor to speak about a specific population that has been and will continue to be affected by this disaster, the most vulnerable population of all, Haitian orphans. Before the earthquake, these children were looking for families, for people to love them and for people to love. This quest has not changed; however, their tenuous situation in life only further deteriorated after the earthquake. While I know that everyone has suffered so much, these children are without the natural protection that parents provide. Therefore, it is our duty to be their voice and to make sure that if they survived the earthquake that they also survive this critical period of time while resources are trying to be delivered and a sense of order is trying to be restored.

This weekend several of my constituents have contacted me about their concern for this most vulnerable population. One constituent wrote:

Senator Casey:

I am writing on behalf of our friends, Michael and Monica Simonsen who have been in the process of adopting their son, Stanley Hermene (DOB: 4/9/2008), from Haiti since August 2008. Stanley was brought to Petit Anges de Chantal orphanage when he was only two months old. He was severely malnourished and covered in scabies. They have visited him in Haiti three times, each time bringing supplies and donations to the orphanage. The resources are scarce under normal circumstances and with the current crisis, there is a genuine concern that the children will not survive.

I am writing to request that you support initiatives created to help expedite the adoption process for children who already have completely committed U.S. approved families waiting at home. Expediting the process will not only secure their safety but will free up already scarce resources for children orphaned by this disaster.

Senator Casey:

After years of personal investment there, Jamie and Ali McMutrie, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, have brought 30 children almost through the entire adoption process to anxiously waiting families here in America. Almost.

The recent earthquake of January 12th has destroyed their orphanage leaving Jamie and Ali to sleep outside on the lawn with all their children. With food and water in short supply and rioters all around, the clock is ticking for you to do something.

I am happy to report that Jamie and Ali McMutrie, who help run the BRESMA orphanage in Haiti, were able to evacuate 53 of their orphans and

united them with their American adoptive parents earlier this week. However, Jamie and Ali were not able to bring back all 150 children at their orphanage home. Many people across the nation like Michael and Monica Simonsen are still waiting to know that their child is safe and many orphans like Jamie and Ali's orphans who remain in Haiti still need food, clean water and a safe place to stay until they can complete an adoption process.

This Monday, the Department of Homeland Security announced that they would use their authority to extend humanitarian parole to Haitian orphans already in the adoptive process with an American family. I commend the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department's Office of Children's Issues for making this policy decision and I fully support their desire to assure that the best interests of these orphans are put first.

However, I am very concerned that when the Department of Homeland Security announced its decision to provide humanitarian parole, there was no plan at that time to ensure a safe and orderly process by which eligible orphans could be processed and evacuated.

I continue to hear reports that orphanage directors in Haiti are going to the U.S. Embassy and while some are being admitted others are being turned away. Some of these orphanages are more than 125 miles away. I am concerned for the safety of the 600-700 orphans that this announcement affects. They may be harmed trying to get to the embassy, and if they are okay on that journey and even succeed in obtaining travel documents, they may be harmed when they are told to wait back at the orphanage until a plane is available. I am also hearing from American families so desperate to ensure their child is safe that they are trying to make their way to Haiti. We don't need more chaos in an already chaotic situation.

I along with some of my colleagues have called on the State Department and USAID to set up safe havens for orphans, which will provide food, water and protection for all orphans as well as time to ensure that those orphans who are eligible for humanitarian parole are processed and evacuated in a timely manner. This is just one idea; however, in the absence of an alternative plan, more and more children will continue to show up at the Embassy's gate.

Therefore, I ask the administration to implement a plan to ensure that these 600-700 orphans are safely and efficiently processed and evacuated to be united with their awaiting adoptive parents, and that we work with the international community and other NGOs on the ground to ensure the safety of all orphans until they can be placed in loving homes. Again, I thank the U.S. governmental officials who have been working around the clock

trying to ensure the safety of these orphans and all those affected in Haiti.

"Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love." Lamentations 3:32. In this time of darkness, I believe that Haiti can emerge in a better place. And I am grateful that our country will be a friend with Haiti in this endeavor.

Similar to a lot of Americans, I am not surprised but heartened and proud by the response of the American people, a tremendous outpouring of generosity. People in America from all walks of life recognized immediately that the people of Haiti, in the depths of an incalculable, an indescribable horror and tragedy, in the depths of that, the American people showed their generosity, they showed that they understand that our Haitian brothers and sisters are just that, they are part of the family, the human family, and they are our brothers and sisters.

The most vulnerable member of that family, in most instances—maybe not in every instance in every family but most of the time—will be a child. We are seeing unforgettable imagery and video of young children being rescued in Haiti, surviving for days at a time in the rubble and the horror they have been living through. Thank goodness so many people have invested in ways to save those children.

But what we still have to do a better job on is making sure that if a Haitian child is in the adoption process, is in the pathway, so to speak, to being adopted, we have to do everything possible, in addition to the obvious safeguarding, to provide that child with security, physical security and food and water and medicine and medical treatment and, in addition to that, that we provide, as expeditiously as possible, a process for their adoption and ways to make it possible for them to be adopted, that the adoptive parent or guardian can have that assurance but also so that child can be well on the way to being adopted.

We do not quite have that yet in terms of what the Federal Government can do and should do. I had a call late this afternoon with Secretary of State Clinton, who should be commended for her work, in a broad way, with regard to the response to the tragedy in Haiti but, in particular, her concern and her actions that she has taken to make sure these young children are taken care of. I will not go into all the details now, but let me cite in summary fashion that a number of my colleagues in the Senate and I have called upon the State Department and USAID to set up safe havens which will provide food, water, and protection for all orphans, as well as time to ensure that these orphans in Haiti who are eligible for what is called humanitarian parole—those who are on the way to being adopted through the process—that those who are eligible for that process, humanitarian parole, are indeed evacuated and processed in a timely manner.

This is just one idea, one way to help. In the absence of an alternative plan,

more and more children will continue to show up at the American Embassy. It is vitally important that happen.

I commend the work of our government at various levels in terms of what they have been doing to respond to the challenge posed by these orphans and their circumstances. I know in our home State of Pennsylvania, Governor Rendell and Congressman ALTMIRE worked very hard to bring some of these children back to Pennsylvania. I commend them for the effort they put forth. For all these reasons, there is plenty of evidence to show that the American people understand that these individuals, these families, and especially these children are God's children. We have to be cognizant of that as we go forward with sound policies in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, first let me say to my colleague, Senator CASEY, his comments about the nearly unspeakable tragedy that has occurred in Haiti strike all of us in a very poignant way. I have been to Haiti. It is one of the poorest regions in the world. We have people in Haiti living in unbelievable poverty. Fly to the airport and near the airport is an area called City Soleil. It is a slum of nearly a half million people living in desperate conditions. The entire country of Haiti has suffered such immense difficulties for so long. The people of Haiti are wonderful people. To be visited now by this great tragedy with an unbelievable loss of life that will exceed 200,000 people is heartbreaking to me, and I know to all Americans who watch this tragedy play out on television as volunteers are digging through rubble and, in some cases, finding people still alive and, in most other cases, finding a lot of people who have lost their lives.

The American people are a people full of great generosity, and that expression of generosity in the form of contributions to organizations that are there helping these people is something that is very important. All of us can be proud of the generosity of this country and what is now happening in the outpouring of support.

CHAIRMAN BERNANKE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise to briefly explain why I am going to vote against the nomination of Mr. Ben Bernanke as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. Mr. Bernanke has been serving as Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. I will be the first to say I think there are things that Mr. Bernanke has done that are very important to this country. He steered our country in a very difficult circumstance. There was a time when our economy could have completely collapsed, which would have been devastating. It was teetering on the precipice of that. Mr. Bernanke and others made decisions, some of which I thought were good decisions.