

sacrifices, financial and personal, to answer the call of this country.

I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking Evelyn Lieberman, Karen Hughes, and James Glassman for answering the call to serve and for their work on behalf of the American people. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

#### RESPONDING TO THE ECONOMY

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, thank you very much. I appreciate the many times Senator KAUFMAN comes to the floor to celebrate what is working in Washington and the good work that is done by so many public officials, but also public employees in our Federal Government.

I rise this afternoon to talk about the recession, unemployment, job loss—all of those related topics—and in a very particular way to focus on the trauma, the suffering that a lot of Pennsylvanians and a lot of Americans are living through right now.

This has been and continues to be a horrific recession for the American people. When we are confronted with that kind of economic difficulty, we need to respond to it in very bold ways. I think we have over the last couple of years and even the last couple of weeks. I will talk about that today. But we do need bold action to put people back to work and to keep our economy moving in the right direction, as I think it is now, more than a year after the recovery bill was enacted.

In Pennsylvania, the unemployment situation is as follows: Our rate is at about 8.8 percent as of January. That is lower than a number of States of comparable size. But, unfortunately, the rate doesn't tell us much. It doesn't often reflect the true meaning or the true impact of unemployment. We have 560,000 people in Pennsylvania out of work through no fault of their own. I think it is also important to put this in the context of where we have been and where we are now, not only in Pennsylvania but across the country.

In late December of 2008, Congress took action to stave off the impending collapse of our Nation's financial system. Months later, the downturn required Congress to pass, as I mentioned before, the recovery bill known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, known by the acronym ARRA. I tend to refer to it as the recovery bill.

These actions were at the time—meaning the legislative actions—unpopular but absolutely necessary. I said we have worked on job creation strategies and legislation more recently within the last couple of weeks. Our majority leader Senator REID has led us in that, and we are making progress. We have more to do.

First, let me go back in time a little bit to the fall of 2008. At that time I happened to be a member of the Banking Committee. We were given briefings at that time on how perilous our

financial system was; that we were on the edge of a cliff in terms of the collapse of our financial system and, therefore, the collapse of our economy. We passed legislation which included the Troubled Asset Relief Program, known by the acronym TARP.

I know as soon as I say it, it doesn't bring back positive recollections for people. It was not popular. Even the bill itself was not that popular—the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act—and part of that was the so called Troubled Asset Relief Program or TARP. But I think it is important to put the facts on the table about what has happened since that time.

The Troubled Asset Relief Program was, indeed, unpopular, but we should note that to date the Treasury Department has spent, invested, or loaned \$500 billion through TARP. To date, almost \$190 billion of the \$500 billion has been returned or paid to the Treasury Department. These actions helped steer the economy back from the brink and, by the program's conclusion, we expect all but \$100 billion of that \$500 billion to be repaid, which makes the Troubled Asset Relief Program significantly less expensive to taxpayers than earlier estimates. It met some of the predictions at the time by some of us that the money would be paid back. So that is good news. It is not enough, though, to report on good news.

We had to take other action. We took action when we passed the recovery bill in the early part of 2009. Just by way of example, Pennsylvania is on track to receive more than \$26 billion through the recovery bill, including billions in direct tax relief. We had 4.9 million Pennsylvanians who got tax relief as part of the recovery bill. Among, or part of, I should say, that more than \$26 billion, \$13.15 billion was in so-called formula-driven funding for health, education, infrastructure, job training, and other aid. It was a tremendous boost to the economy in Pennsylvania, not only creating jobs but preventing the erosion of our job creation strategies and preventing people from being laid off, including teachers in school districts, law enforcement officials, as well as in jump-starting the economy of Pennsylvania. We still have a ways to go. We still have basically another year of a jump-starting effect for the recovery bill.

Across the country, when we measure the impact of the recovery bill, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, which is known by the acronym CBO—we hear about it all the time, but they are a referee in a sense in Washington, an arbiter of what the numbers mean. The CBO reported a few weeks ago that the Recovery Act added between 1 million and 2.1 million jobs by the fourth quarter of 2009. Again, impressive, halfway basically—or almost, I should say, halfway through the recovery bill's implementation at the end of 2009, 1 million to 2 million jobs. The CBO also said the Recovery Act raised economic growth by 1.5 percent

to 3.5 percent over that same period. So it has contributed to growth.

The CBO Director, Doug Elmendorf, said during a recent Joint Economic hearing:

[T]he policies that were enacted in the bill are increasing GDP and employment relative to what it otherwise would be.

So that is the CBO talking about the recovery bill as another way to measure. There are lots of ways to measure the impact and, I would argue, the success of it.

In January of 2009 the country lost 1.2 million jobs. Job loss, as of the most recent report for February, was a little more than 60,000 jobs, just about 62,000 jobs. So that reduction or diminution in the number of jobs lost from 1.5 million jobs to 62,000 jobs is, indeed, substantial progress but, again, it is not enough. We have to keep going. We have to keep putting in place strategies to create many more jobs.

The facts speak for themselves. More people are currently employed and more goods and services are being produced as a result of the Recovery Act. Put another way, if the Recovery Act had not been enacted, the economic situation would be much worse than it is today. That is an understatement, if we did not pass that legislation.

But we need to do more and move forward. We need to pass legislation to continue to create jobs. That is why I am standing today in support of passage of the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act, the legislation we are now considering. This legislation contains vital policies that will support our workers and our businesses as we recover from the recent economic recession. The most important part of the legislation is the extension of unemployment insurance and COBRA health insurance through December 31 of this year.

The national unemployment rate is 9.7 percent. It is expected to remain at this level, unfortunately, through most of 2010. I mentioned earlier that in Pennsylvania it is about a point lower, 8.8 percent. There are 560,000 Pennsylvanians who are out of work. These numbers are far too high for us to in any way be satisfied with the positive impact the recovery bill has had and other measures we have taken.

We are about to pass and enact into law the HIRE Act—four provisions agreed to in a bipartisan way. We have to do more than that as well. Congress must continue to provide for comprehensive unemployment benefits and a subsidy to pay for COBRA health insurance for those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. The eligibility for emergency unemployment compensation and COBRA premium assistance will expire at the end of March. According to our State's department of labor and industry, hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvania workers could lose unemployment benefits over the next several months without an extension.

An extension of federally funded unemployment compensation and the

COBRA health insurance subsidy through the end of this year, December 31, is necessary for several reasons. First, State labor departments—and this is true across the board—will now be under pressure to constantly update their systems and inform constituents of the changes in Federal law. Why should we keep passing an extension of a month or two or three when we could pass legislation to give certainty, most importantly to that unemployed worker and his or her family—they are the most important part of this story—but also to State labor departments and other officials in departments so they do not have to continue to make changes to their system. People who were recently laid off will constantly be reminded that their unemployment benefits may run out sooner than expected, especially at a time when there are six applicants for every one job.

Second, our State labor department makes a point that at a time when millions of people do not have health care coverage, failure to provide an adequate safety net to ensure people maintain adequate and affordable health coverage will only add to the rolls of the uninsured in the country.

During my travels throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I have met and I will continue to meet or hear from numerous people who are in desperate need of help.

Recently, the Hanlon family of Pleasantville, PA, contacted my office to share their story. Here is but one story, but it is very telling about what families are up against.

Lisa and Jeff Hanlon have four young children. Until recently, Jeff and Lisa were both employed by the same company and, in their words, “the family lived a solid middle-class experience.” Jeff worked at the company for nearly 8 years. Over time, he began to experience severe health problems, including suffering three heart attacks. When the economic downturn hit, Jeff was downsized by the company and the family lost their health insurance. The blow of losing health insurance could not have come at a worse time. Just one of Jeff’s hospital bills was \$398,000.

Due to his medical condition, Jeff was unable to work. Too sick to work, it took a long time for Jeff to apply for and receive Social Security. During this time, the family experienced severe hardship and sold everything of value to keep their home and stay afloat. Mrs. Hanlon told our office that their children went without medical help for a year—young children going without medical help for a year because their father or mother loses a job. That is unacceptable. We should act on the statement “that is unacceptable in America today.” What the Hanlons had to do was choose what bills to pay to feed their children. Without means, the children were not able to participate in sports or any school activities. Even now, the family’s current income is a fraction of what it was.

Another example, in addition to the Hanlons, is Janet Lee Smith, a single mother of two girls. Her difficulties began back in 2003 when she was laid off from a 26-year career. As Janet tells the story, the company began outsourcing to Mexico, which made her position obsolete.

Faced with the tremendous responsibility of raising two young girls, she decided to go back to school while still working. In 2005, she graduated from a Penn State extension campus with an associate’s degree in human development and family studies. Unfortunately, additional education was not enough to get her a job in this tough economic climate. So once again, Janet turned to odd jobs and part-time jobs until 2008, when she was finally blessed with a full-time job as an administrative assistant. Nine months later, once again she was told that business was slow and she would, in her words, “once again become a statistic as a ‘dislocated worker.’”

Today, unable to find full-time work, Janet is back in school and working part time. She says she feels she has to do whatever she can “to get her girls through school healthy and strong.” In Janet’s words:

It is not a good feeling at all being told that you are going to be laid off, especially when you are the only income that your family depends on. It has been a struggle keeping up my spirits and trying not to let my girls see that I am stressed.

That is what Janet tells us, and that is what the Hanlon family tells us. Despite these challenges—and I have seen this across our State—despite these challenges, Janet is still optimistic. She says:

I am confident that this time I will be able to find that one job. I know that they are out there. I had a good job before and I will have a good job again.

I heard this in many instances across our State. I was at a job center in south central Pennsylvania, just outside Gettysburg. I met with 8 of those 560,000 people who are out of work. I heard the same thing there. Eight Pennsylvanians—at least six were over the age of 50 and the others were over the age of 60—had never been out of work in their lives, never had to rely on food stamps, and almost in every case never had to rely on unemployment insurance. And they find themselves in this predicament. Despite that, there is a burning flame of optimism inside them. Despite their setbacks, they are willing to keep filling out forms, keep applying, keeping their heads up, and keep moving forward.

Debbie, a woman, who was one of those eight I spoke to that day, probably said it best—simply: All I want to do is get back to work. We see that across the board.

What are we going to do in Congress? Are we going to preach? We will only have unemployment for another couple weeks or a few months. We are only going to have COBRA insurance for a couple of weeks, a couple of months. It

is easy for us to say when we have health care, Federal employees that we are, and we have job security.

For those who say we should not do it, we should not extend these safety net programs, before they make a speech about it, they should tell their constituents about why they do not want to support it. Tell Janet Smith and tell the Hanlon family why it is not a good idea to support unemployment insurance and COBRA health insurance. The security of Washington allows a lot of people to avoid that conversation. The security of being a Federal employee, of being a Senator or a House Member and having health coverage and job security allows us the luxury of not having to look those families in the eye and tell them. I think if people were more honest about it around here, they would.

In addition to aiding families who are desperately in need of putting food on the table and a roof over their heads, an extension of the unemployment insurance has a direct impact on our Nation’s economy. We know, for example, that again the Congressional Budget Office says that for every \$1 spent in unemployment insurance benefits, upwards of \$1.90 is contributed to the gross domestic product.

Mark Zandi, an economist I have quoted often, a Pennsylvanian—a little bias there, but he also worked on Senator McCain’s Presidential campaign, so he is not someone coming from a purely Democratic point of view—Mark Zandi has stated that for every \$1 spent in unemployment insurance benefits, upwards of \$1.63 is contributed to the gross domestic product. If you spend a buck on unemployment insurance, the taxpayers get \$1.63 back in return.

In addition to unemployment insurance and COBRA health insurance, the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act provides a range of tax credits that will help businesses and State governments to create and retain jobs. For example, the bill contains an extension of the biodiesel fuel credit, which will put a number of Pennsylvanians back to work across the country.

The bill contains a research and development tax credit that will provide businesses with financial resources to compete in a global marketplace.

Finally, the bill will assist our teachers by providing a tax deduction for those teachers who spend their own money to buy supplies for their classrooms and students—something I have seen in Pennsylvania for many years, teachers constantly reaching into their own pockets to buy supplies and equipment they need for them to teach our children.

I say in conclusion, I and I know many others strongly support passage of the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act. This legislation is necessary to continue to spur economic growth and create jobs in Pennsylvania and across our country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

#### TAX EXTENDERS ACT OF 2009

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4213, which the clerk the report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4213), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

##### Pending:

Baucus amendment No. 3336, in the nature of a substitute.

Baucus (for Webb-Boxer) modified amendment No. 3342 to (amendment No. 3336), to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on excessive 2009 bonuses received from certain major recipients of Federal emergency economic assistance, to limit the deduction allowable for such bonuses.

Feingold-Coburn amendment No. 3368 (to amendment No. 3336), to provide for the rescission of unused transportation earmarks and to establish a general reporting requirement for any unused earmarks.

McCain-Graham amendment No. 3427 (to amendment No. 3336), to prohibit the use of reconciliation to consider changes in Medicare.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I make a point of order, en bloc, that the pending amendments Nos. 3342, 3368, and 3427 are not germane postcloture.

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

Mr. REID. The point of order is well taken?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The amendments all propose new subject matter. The amendments are nongermane and the point of order is well taken.

Mr. REID. The amendments fall; is that right?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The amendments fall; that is correct.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Senate can take an important step today in alleviating the incredible strains this continuing economic crisis is having on thousands of families in my State, and millions of families across America. In approving the American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act of 2010, we can end what has been an agonizing procession of will-we-or-

won't-we votes on extending unemployment benefits and COBRA insurance subsidies for those who have lost their jobs. And we can ensure that, by extending enhanced Federal payments to State Medicaid programs, crucial health coverage and other vital State services are not cut.

Those who doubt the wisdom of extending unemployment and COBRA benefits until the end of this year should hear the phone calls and read the letters that have come into my office over the past few weeks. As the Congress has debated, and delayed, on the question of whether to pass another short-term extension, these Americans, left jobless by a crisis not of their own making, wondered if the economic lifeline that keeps food on their tables and shelter over their heads would be severed. By approving this legislation, we will ensure that these families are not left in limbo by delays in Congress. Giving them some measure of certainty, at a time when the economic crisis has turned so much upside-down, is the right thing to do. What's more, continuing these benefits is one of the most important steps we can take to nurture the fragile recovery of our economy. These payments benefit not just families coping with unemployment, but provide an immediate stimulus to local economies that have been devastated by the recession.

Likewise, the decision to extend enhanced Federal Medicaid assistance percentages, or FMAP, funding to States, boosts the entire economy while helping those in the greatest need. Michigan and other States have made clear that without this extension, we would leave giant holes in their budget. In the absence of enhanced funding, the steps the States would have to take balance their budgets could mean devastating cuts to vital programs that serve the victims of this crisis. Such cuts would also dampen the recovery, removing a pillar that has kept economic activity from collapsing during the crisis. Extending these payments gives States, and the citizens they serve, much-needed certainty.

This legislation also would continue tax provisions that can provide additional support to economic recovery and job creation. In extending the research and development tax credit and other measures, we give our businesses another tool they can use as they seek to regain ground, begin growing again and start putting people back to work. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for this important legislation.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the Senate is passing the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act, STELA. This legislation modernizes and extends important provisions of the Satellite Home Viewer Act, which contains statutory copyright licenses and Communications Act authorizations that allow for the retransmission of broadcast television signals by satellite and cable providers.

Ensuring that Americans have access to broadcast television content is important, and it is particularly relevant for consumers in rural areas who might not otherwise be able to receive these signals over the air. The legislation that the Senate is passing today will ensure that nobody will be left in the dark for the foreseeable future.

The Satellite Home Viewer Act provides cable and satellite companies with statutory licenses to allow them to retransmit the content of broadcast television stations. It also contains important authorizations in the Communications Act that facilitate these retransmissions. Broadcast television plays a critical role in cities and towns across the country, and remains the primary way in which consumers are able to access local content such as news, weather, and sports.

Cable and satellite providers help to expand the footprint of broadcast stations by allowing them to reach viewers who are unable to receive signals over the air. Vermont is an example of how cable and satellite companies can provide service to consumers in rural areas who might not otherwise receive these signals.

Vermonters will see improved service when this legislation is enacted. As the act has been reauthorized over the years, I have worked to improve the service that Vermonters receive from cable and satellite companies. Residents in southern Vermont have seen improvements. Windham and Bennington Counties are not considered part of the Burlington television market that encompasses the rest of the State, and for many years those residents were unable to receive Vermont broadcast stations by satellite. Congress changed this in 2004, and DirecTV has been providing these Vermonters with access to Vermont stations ever since.

I am also pleased that under this legislation, DISH Network will be able to provide their subscribers in southern Vermont with the same service. As soon as the DISH Network uses this authority, virtually everyone in the State will be able to access the news and information that is truly important to Vermonters, whether it is the debate over relicensing the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon or the UVM basketball team's quest to make the NCAA Tournament.

One other important way that STELA will preserve and improve existing service for consumers is by correcting a flaw in the statutory copyright license for the cable industry. An unintended result of current law is that the cable license requires the cable industry to pay copyright holders for signals that many of their subscribers do not actually receive. This is often referred to as the phantom signal problem. The effect of this anomaly in the law is that Comcast is required to pay copyright royalties based on their subscriber base across the northeast for the Canadian television content