

agencies will have absolutely no ability to keep their programs up and running. They will have to terminate benefits.

Over 6 million workers are depending on extended benefits and they are distraught. Yet again, this debate is going down to the wire, causing them unnecessary stress, unnecessary anxiety. They have already been through enough. They deserve better. They deserve our support.

Unemployment benefits are used for basic necessities—food and shelter—while the laid-off worker seeks a new job. These benefits are critical to a worker and his or her family and to the economies of the community. I hope we do what is right and find a solution to help the people whom we work for.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 323, H.R. 4851, to provide a temporary extension of certain programs; that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Reserving the right to object, I wish to ask the chairman of the committee a question.

Mr. BAUCUS. I yield.

Mr. COBURN. Is this bill you have just called up and asked unanimous consent to move forward on paid for?

Mr. BAUCUS. This is a bill which requires urgent attention. It is not paid for.

Mr. COBURN. Given that fact, as I stated in my earlier speech, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WEBB. Madam President, I assume we are now in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. WEBB. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes.

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

VETERANS BENEFITS

Mr. WEBB. Madam President, last night we had an issue involving the well-being of our veterans who I think got caught up in the give-and-take of the debate on the health care bill, particularly the procedural aspects of it. An amendment was offered to the bill by Senator BURR, and a counteroffer was made to solve these two disparities, one regarding TRICARE and another regarding a certain section of title 38 with respect to veterans health care through unanimous consent, since one of the bills had already been voted on unanimously in the House and the other one certainly there is no real objection to. The request to pass these bills immediately, which would have made them law today, was objected to. Senator BURR's amendment also went down.

I wish to say first, I don't think there is any debate in this body about the dedication that Senator BURR has to our veterans. I think that goes for all Members of this body. There is no one in this body who isn't fully dedicated to the well-being of our veterans and our Active-Duty military people as well. I think it is a shame that the procedural aspects of what we were debating overcame something that should have been a simple process.

In that spirit, I have been discussing this matter with Senator BURR, and we are going to take two amendments that were offered last night for unanimous consent to see if we can't clear them on both sides and to have these protections, these express protections for the medical care of those who are serving and those who have served take their rightful place as protected in the larger aspect of this health care reform. We are going to work to clear them on both sides, hopefully, to get this matter resolved. We can have our political debates and we will have our political debates, but all of us need to come together to make sure that those who serve fully understand the dedication of this body.

So I hope the other side will help us move these two amendments forward. I appreciate Senator BURR's support in that effort. Also, as I said, I very much appreciate the dedication he has always shown to our veterans. He is the ranking Republican on the Veterans' Committee, and no one is in any way questioning that aspect of his service in the Senate.

So I just wished to again point out that we are going to attempt to clear these today. We can resolve this matter within a day or two. It will become law. Our veterans and those serving will know they are fully protected.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, I wish to salute my colleague from Virginia. There has been no one in this body who has stood more firmly and more intelligently and more successfully for veterans than the junior Senator from Virginia, and I thank him. I hope the other side will heed what he has asked, which is not anything to do with politics but simply in the benefit of our veterans.

A JOB WELL DONE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, second—and I am going to speak on a local matter in a minute—I wish to compliment Senators REID and BAUCUS and HARKIN and DODD for the great job they have done. What a momentous day it is. Today is a moment to ignore the politics—how it will affect this party or this election or this President.

For the next decade and henceforth, there are going to be 1 million people each week whose lives are made better by what we have done today. There is going to be a young person, God forbid, who is in an automobile accident and because she has good health insurance, she will get cured and live a better life; whereas, until now, she wouldn't. There is going to be somebody who has cancer, and in the past their insurance company would have said: Forget it. Now they are going to get that treatment. There is going to be a poor person who walks into a community health center and gets diagnosed early and cured and able to live a productive life. There are going to be countless young people who are worried. My daughter called me right after the House passed health insurance at 1 in the morning and she said: Dad—she is getting out of law school. She is going to have no health insurance until she starts her job 4 or 5 months from now, and she was worried about whether she could afford to buy it. She said: Dad, I got health insurance. I can be on yours.

So it is little instances and big instances. Every day, every week, every month people's lives are going to be made so much better by what we have done. That is what we ought to think about today, regardless of our differences. I am proud to win a small part of that, but again, I salute some of the giants who led us here: the President, whose faith in getting this done never wavered; Speaker PELOSI and her crew over in the House; and, of course, our leader, HARRY REID, who, in his low-key but relentless way, makes sure we do what we have to do and unites our cause.

NASA SPACE SHUTTLE RETIREMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I wish to spend the rest of this time talking about a local matter of some concern. One of the nice things about being a Senator, you work on big matters and small matters and they are all enjoyable and all are important. This isn't small but more local, shall I say.

With NASA searching for a new home for three soon-to-be-retired space shuttles, it is time to convince NASA that the Big Apple has the right stuff to showcase one of these iconic spacecraft.

The perfect location for a retired space shuttle is the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum on Manhattan's West Side in my hometown of New York City.

Yes, it will be a huge boon to New York's economy and a magnet for tourists.

But showcasing a genuine space shuttle will not only bring visitors by the millions, it will inspire multitudes to learn, explore and dream, of adventure.

It is perfect for NASA, too: The agency's explicit goal is to have these magnificent vehicles seen—and their history understood—by the greatest number of people possible.

No other location in the nation can offer the millions and millions of visitors who will stream into the Intrepid to view and experience the shuttle.

Housing an iconic spacecraft in New York City—the media center of the world—guarantees it will appear in countless news and entertainment programs broadcast throughout the nation and world, providing incalculable public-relations value to NASA.

Just yesterday I spoke to NASA Administrator Charles Bolden and he has informed me that the Intrepid is in good shape to be the permanent hangar for one of the shuttles.

The Intrepid is competing with museums in 25 other cities to win one of the shuttles, including Washington's Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

NASA has been clear that they intend to award the shuttles to the sites where the most people could view them.

With the Intrepid already drawing one million visitors a year it is clear that the Intrepid is the best possible spot for a shuttle.

NASA also requires any potential host location to raise significant funds.

I have no doubt that the Intrepid's drawing power and New York City's deep and diverse philanthropic community are more than able to compile all the resources needed.

Yet skeptics may ask why a space shuttle should be brought to New York City.

Perhaps they don't know that the Intrepid led the recovery of astronauts during the Mercury and Gemini programs in the 1960s.

The exhibit will be sure to attract heavy foot traffic too: The Intrepid will house the shuttle in a glass enclosure on Pier 86—close to Times Square and many other tourist attractions, accessible from major airports, passenger-ship terminals and highways.

Countless boys and girls, as well as adults, with boundless imaginations, will be able to stroll over to the West Side and take in the truly magnificent icon of science, exploration and innovation.

With 20 institutions across the country competing to receive one of the retired shuttles, *Discovery*, *Endeavour* and *Atlantis*, we should all join the fight to bring a space shuttle to the greatest city in the world, a no-brainer.

It is a non-brainer.

I, along with some of my New York colleagues, are working hard to land the shuttle here, and I hope we are able to convince NASA that we are ready, willing—and very able—to be the home for a shuttle.

I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I object until we discuss the order of business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. I assure my colleagues that—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SCHUMER. Without objection, Madam President.

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

(Mr. SCHUMER addressed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that first the Senator from Oklahoma be recognized for 5 minutes, then the Senator from North Dakota be recognized for 10 minutes and that no motions be in order during the time of their speeches and immediately thereafter we resort back to a quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, while the Senator from New York is here, I might go over 5 minutes to 6 minutes or 7 minutes. I wonder if he will object and modify his request.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that my request be modified so that the Senator from Oklahoma may have up to 10 minutes to speak.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I wish to spend a short period of time, and hopefully it will not even be 5 minutes.

What we have seen on the floor this afternoon is a motion to accomplish what the chairman of the Finance Committee wanted us to accomplish, without adding to the debt. We did not reach agreement on that motion. It was tabled. Then what we saw was a motion to proceed to take care of these issues by adding \$9.2 billion to the debt. That is the real debate: are we going to pay for what we do? There is not an agreement to move forward and pay for it, and there is not an agreement to move forward and not pay for it.

There is a process here called cloture, which means that by Wednesday, if all time is consumed, this problem would be solved and it would be dealt with. It is unfortunate that the potential is that we may go home and not deal with this issue, having us vote against ta-

bling a motion to supply these needed priorities but also making sure we do not add to the debt as we do it.

I look forward to the rest of the afternoon. I will not consume any additional time but will note that I do not care how we pay for it as long as it is legitimate, as long as we do not add to our kids' debt. I am hoping and willing to negotiate on any area of waste in the Federal Government that we can eliminate to pay for it. We cannot pay for part of it; we need to pay for all of it because we violate the principle of stealing from our kids.

I advise the Senator from Alabama that we have unanimous consent and I cannot break off, and the Senator from North Dakota will be recognized after I yield the floor, so I cannot in good conscience yield to the Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I understand. I am proud of the commitment the Senator from Oklahoma has made and totally recognize it.

Mr. COBURN. Madam President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, this is a pretty disappointing thing to see on the floor of the Senate—a discussion about the potential of having unemployment insurance at this point in time lapse, let it lapse during one of the steepest recessions since the Great Depression.

Unemployment insurance is not some abstraction when we have 15 million, 16 million, 17 million people who got up this morning in this country and looked for work, people who lost their jobs and then searched valiantly to find a new job and could not find a new job, and so they pay their rent, they buy food, they provide for their children, they buy school clothes with unemployment insurance.

We are told: We cannot reach an agreement, so we will just let it expire. We will not extend it. It will be OK.

It will be OK for everybody here who gets up and showers in the morning and puts on a nice blue suit and comes to work. There is nobody here who is unemployed, but there are a whole lot of people in this country who are unemployed.

If ever there were a need to extend unemployment insurance, it is now. We cannot do that to the most vulnerable people in this country.

It is very interesting. It was not too many months ago that there was a proposal on the floor of the Senate: Let's give \$700 billion to the biggest financial firms in America to bail them out. They ran this country into the ditch with unbelievable greed and speculation and recklessness. Then after running this country into the economic ditch, there is a bill brought to the Congress that says: We need to bail them out, \$700 billion—a three-page bill. They said: We need to have it passed in 3 days—\$700 billion. I did not vote for it, but there are plenty of people who did who now say it is too much