

asking that we provide some temporary assistance to them.

I yield 10 minutes to the distinguished Senator from Iowa.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

CONTINUING EXTENSION ACT OF 2010

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague and dear friend, Senator STABENOW, for those kind words. I know no one who cares more deeply and works harder in this body for the average American family, for the workers of this country, than DEBBIE STABENOW. She is always there thinking about how we can make their lives better, what we can do to increase employment opportunities for working families. The fact she is here today leading the debate on extending unemployment insurance again shows her dedication to those hard-working men and women who make this country what it is. I thank the Senator from Michigan for her leadership in this crucial area.

I listened to the news this morning on the radio while driving in. The new figures are out for growth rate. We are growing now at about—last quarter was about 5 percent. That is a turnaround from a negative 6 percent 1 year ago. Also, in unemployment, about 1 year ago we were losing jobs at 750,000 each month. It came down to only 35,000 jobs we were losing a month in the last 3 months. Every expectation is that when we end March, we will actually be in the positive once again. It shows that President Obama's economic policies and programs and what we did in the Recovery Act are working.

This is encouraging news. However, there are still almost 15 million hard-working people who lost their jobs and still struggling to find work. For these people, the recession is still a reality and recovery seems far out of reach.

There have been 6.1 million people out of work for more than half a year. That is the highest number of long-term unemployed we have had since we started keeping track in 1948. The families of these long-term unemployed are hanging by a thread. Their savings are exhausted. The unemployment benefits they get are the lifeline that helps them pay the rent, put food on the table, and keep their kids in school.

Yet in the face of this unprecedented crisis and long-term unemployment, a short-term extension of unemployment insurance is being needlessly, needlessly—I would say cruelly—obstructed in the Senate. In a real case of *deja vu*, a few members of the minority party are yet again stonewalling a piece of legislation that I think most people in this room and most of the people in this country would agree is vitally important.

Indeed, we know for a fact there is broad support for extending benefits in the Senate because we already passed a

longer extension earlier this year. That is what is most illogical about this whole situation. We have already said we want to continue the Federal extended benefits program through the end of this year. We are now just waiting for the House to act. But now we cannot pass a 30-day extension to give the House the time they need to catch up. That does not make sense. We have already passed it for the year. We just need to fill in a small gap for 1 month. Those on the minority side are saying no.

As a result of this political gamesmanship, more than 37,000 unemployed Americans will be abruptly cut off from Federal unemployment benefits. They will lose their subsidized COBRA health insurance coverage during the first week of April. In my own State of Iowa, about 1,200 workers struggling with joblessness will see their safety net drop out from underneath them.

Blocking this bill may be a political game for some in the minority party, but it is not a game for millions of Americans who, in a matter of days, will lose their lifeline. For them, the obstruction of this bill, by just a few in this Chamber, is a personal and family crisis of the first magnitude.

It is interesting, we are going to be leaving here today. I guess this will be the last day before the Easter recess. We are out for 2 weeks. Senators will be going back to their States, probably traveling and doing different activities with their families. They will probably be having nice Easter dinners with all their families. Guess what. Not one Member of this Senate or the House will lose their pay or benefits during this period of time. How about all the people out there right now who are facing an April 5 cutoff of their unemployment benefits, a cutoff of their COBRA health benefits? These are not people who have a big bank vault with a lot of money on which they can draw. These are people hanging by a thread. They have been out of work at least for over half a year. It almost borders on the unconscionable that we would leave and not pass this bill.

I know those on the other side say we have to pay for it. I am all for paying for things, but I daresay, if a tornado wiped out a town in Oklahoma or we had a flood, as some are having in the Midwest, that wiped out a community and we needed to rush money in and rush items in to help people, would we stand here and say: Oh, no, we can't call that an emergency; that is not an emergency; somehow we have to come up with the pay-fors right away. No, it would be an emergency. We would rush in to help.

For the thousands of Americans who are going to lose their unemployment on April 5, it is an emergency. It is as if a tornado hit their home or a flood wiped out their community. It is an emergency, and we respond to emergencies with emergency spending—that is all we are saying—for 30 days, short term. This is an emergency. Yet it is

being obstructed by the minority, by the Republicans. Let's say it for what it is. The Republicans are stopping this legislation. It is simply inexplicable.

There is no reason to put millions of families through the stress and uncertainty of wondering whether their benefits are disappearing. There is no reason to put States through the trouble and administrative expense that comes with a lapse in the program. That is even going to cost more money.

The flood insurance program also needs to be extended or many people purchasing a home will not be able to close on their homes, causing major economic problems for them and the home seller.

Extending benefits is good for the families, workers, the States, and our economy. Economists calculate that every \$1 invested in the unemployment insurance safety net generates \$1.90 in economic activity. Unemployed households spend these dollars on immediate needs—to pay the rent or medical bill, buy groceries and school supplies, or repair the family car—all economic activities that quickly inject dollars into our communities.

I call on my colleagues to stop their obstruction and do the right thing. Do the right thing. Just think about those people out there who are going to lose these benefits on April 5. I know some people say we will come back on the 12th and maybe by the 15th of the month we will be able to take care of it and we will go retroactive and fill that in. These are not people who can just go down to the bank and have a line of credit. These are people who probably in desperation—in desperation—will go down to some loan shark, get some kind of payday loan, something like that, and pay 20 percent interest on it for a couple weeks because they are that desperate.

I think it is unconscionable that we would hold this up because a few say we have to pay for it. We will pay for it. They say we cannot put this off on our children and our grandchildren. I agree, we have to be careful. We have to start getting out of the hole we are in. We are in a hole economically. Don't put it all on the backs of the few who have been out of work for so long facing getting their money cut off on April 5. Let's have a little heart. Let's have a little compassion. Let's have a little understanding of what these people are going through every day in their lives, the stress they have. Let's do the right thing and extend unemployment benefits for 1 month.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator STABENOW control the time from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.; that I control the time from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.; that Senator STABENOW control the time from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.; that I control the time from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.; and that Senator STABENOW control the time from 12 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.

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

Mr. COBURN. I yield to the Senator from Michigan.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oklahoma.

Mr. President, we are here today because Republicans are objecting again to critical legislation and critical problem-solving efforts that are going to help middle-class families, that are going to help move us forward as a country.

We have seen, over and over, a pattern in the last year and 2 years ago when they first began to move this kind of a strategy forward, of blocking, blocking, blocking, saying no, saying no, saying no, rather than working together to solve critical issues. People are facing some of the most daunting challenges right now, more than they ever have in their lifetime—either trying to hold on to their job, trying to find a job, trying to make sure they have medical care for their families—and we have taken a very critical step this week to be able to ease some of those challenges and fears. Americans are struggling in an economy they didn't create, and when we look over this pattern, I am compelled to speak for a moment about it.

Over the history of our country, we have never seen such obstruction, efforts to block what we are doing, as we are now seeing. In the last 2 years, there were a total of 139 filibusters and efforts to block. That was in a 2-year period. Today, barely into the new year, after a little over a year, we are at 130 different times that the other party has said no to doing things that would help middle-class families, that would help small businesses, and that would help us move this country forward. One hundred thirty times. Unheard of, never happened before.

I know for people watching, they probably wonder: What in the world is going on here, and why should we care about procedure? We just want you to solve problems. But it is the effort we saw in the past with the Senator from Kentucky, who blocked for days our effort to move forward and extend unemployment benefits for families who are out of work through no fault of their own. People want to work, Mr. President, as you know, and they work hard. It is not their fault this economy went into a tailspin, which, quite frankly, in my judgment, was caused as a result of the policies of the previous administration that for 8 years chose to focus on just a few people. So the people in Michigan are saying: What about the rest of us? What about the rest of us? We are not the Wall Street fat cats. We are not the CEOs with the big bonuses or the people who got the big tax cuts. We are just working every day. We just want the American dream for our kids. We want to know things are going to be better. We want to know we can

send our kids to college so they will have a great opportunity to be the best they can be.

That is who we are fighting for, and that is why we took subsidies from banks this week and gave the money directly to students, to create opportunities for those who want to go to college. That is why we have focused on lowering costs for middle-class families and small businesses on health insurance. But we are back here today because, unfortunately, our Republican colleagues are trying to score political points on the backs of people who have lost their jobs.

Now, I know a great way to bring down the deficit, and one that hasn't been tried. The 8 years that our colleagues were in control, along with President Bush, they focused on the people at the top and said that was going to do it. If it had worked, that would have been great, but unfortunately they left everybody else behind, and we saw what happened. So I have a great idea. Let's focus on putting everybody back to work so they can contribute to our economy by paying their taxes, and that will pay down the deficit. That is what President Clinton did. That is what the Democrats did when we were last in control. That is what we are focused on doing now—putting people back to work—because that is the formula for bringing down this deficit.

The challenge we have is that we have one job for every six people who are looking right now. So we aren't in a situation yet where we have the jobs available for every person who wants to work and is able to work. That is what we are laser-focused on here in the Congress. But we need to continue to understand, as Senator HARKIN has said, that too many families are caught in this economic tsunami. Whether it is a flood, a hurricane, or the fact that your community got wiped out because a plant closed, it is an economic emergency.

We have always stepped up and funded the extension of unemployment benefits as an emergency with emergency funding. We have always done that, and now we are being asked to change that. We weren't asked to change it for Wall Street and the bailout. We weren't asked to change it for the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. But we are being asked to change it on the backs of working people, and I believe that is wrong.

We are still recovering from the worst economic situation since the Great Depression, but we are recovering. When President Obama took office, we were losing 800,000 jobs a month—too many of them in my great State of Michigan. We are now, at the end of the year, down to losing close to zero a month. That is better—not good enough, so we must stay focused, but we are hearing that we are going to have some pretty good numbers from March, where people are actually going back to work and jobs are being cre-

ated. I don't want to stop and I know the Presiding Officer doesn't want to stop until every single person who is able to work and who wants a job has the dignity of work so that we give breadwinners the ability to bring the bread home. And that is what this is about.

So we are in a situation where we are in transition, and too many families are caught. In my great State, the unemployment rate is still the highest in the country—14.1 percent. It is coming down slowly, but it is still way too high. We have almost 700,000 people who have lost their jobs and are looking for work. But that is only the official number. That doesn't include the people who are working one part-time job, two part-time jobs, three part-time jobs trying to hold it together or people who have been out of work so long they no longer qualify for any kind of help. Those numbers are much bigger.

Every day, the unemployment insurance agency in Michigan gets 13,000 to 15,000 phone calls from people asking for help—every day. Every single day, up to 15,000 phone calls come in from people in Michigan who are desperate about what they are going to do in this situation. Well, we can help them. That is what this is about. That is what we are trying to do.

If this isn't an emergency, I don't know what is. The other side says: No, it is not an emergency. But for families who have lost their jobs and who are trying to find work, trying to put food on the table, I can assure you, this is an emergency. It is an economic disaster. When 14.9 million people around the country are unemployed, to me, that is a disaster. And those are the people we are fighting for today, yesterday, tomorrow. Those are the people who, when Wall Street got bailed out, said to us: What about us? Well, part of the answer is, to make sure they can keep a roof over their head and food on the table, to allow them to receive unemployment benefits. And these aren't huge numbers. They do not begin to match the Wall Street bonuses. We are talking about \$250, \$300 a week. But it may be the difference between being able to keep your family going or not.

In this legislation, we have a very important provision on health care—on COBRA. When COBRA was put in place, it was a great idea. If you lost your job, you could pay to continue the health insurance your employer was providing. The problem is, it is way too expensive when you are paying both the employee and the employer side. So last year, in the Recovery Act, we put some help in place: 65 percent would be paid for by the Federal Government to help families keep their insurance going. That is also a part of this—to keep that going so families can keep their health care. That is extremely important.

We need to focus on the real challenges families are facing today and work together across the aisle to tackle those. People are so tired of the

games. They are so tired of it. They watch what is happening here, and they say: What are these people thinking? What are they doing?

I know that politically folks may gain points by objecting, blocking, filibustering 130 times, but it makes the whole process look messy—terribly messy. It causes people to lose faith in their government. That may seem to have some short-term advantage, but I believe that is a disastrous direction for our country. People want to know we are going to work together. People are going to want to know we put priorities in the right place so that we are focusing on the majority of Americans, not an elite few.

The great thing about our country is the middle class. That is what has always differentiated us from other countries—the fact that we make things, we grow things, and we add value to it. And by the way, we make things and grow things very well in Michigan, Mr. President. We will take on any State. We will take on anybody. We know how to do things. We know how to work, we know how to make things.

But we have not had this focus over the last decade on strengthening that middle class. We are turning that around now, and I am very proud of the fact that we are seeing manufacturing begin to turn, that we are seeing efforts that we put in place through the Recovery Act putting people back to work.

Too many families are not yet feeling that economic recovery, and this is for them. This is about saying to the American people, middle-class families across the country: You know what, we get it. We are sorry you are having to go through this, and we are going to do our part. We are going to do whatever we can to make sure you have the resources to keep things together while you are going out and looking for that job or going back to job training and holding things together with bits and pieces—odd jobs, part-time jobs—until this economy turns around.

We know, ultimately, that it is about jobs. We know, ultimately, it is about the private sector creating those jobs. But there is a partnership we need to have between the Federal Government and our industry so they can successfully compete in a global economy. Rather than focusing on Democrats versus Republicans, who can score the next short-term gain in the election, we should be coming together and realize that this is an economic race between the United States and China, it is the United States versus Japan, it is the United States versus Korea. We are in a global economic race. Instead of spending time objecting, playing games, filibustering at an unheard of rate in our history—absolutely unheard of; never before have we seen this kind of obstruction—we ought to be coming together and be laser-focused on China, which is spending \$288 million every day—\$288 million every day—to beat us on clean energy tech-

nology. Let's make that the fight. Let's make that the fight together.

This is the wrong place and time to be obstructing and playing games. It is the wrong place to say that suddenly we want to balance the deficit on the backs of people who are out of work through no fault of their own; that we are going to change the rules now; that it is no longer an emergency and no longer emergency spending. We shouldn't be changing the rules now and doing it to people who are out of work. That is not fair.

I say to my colleagues: Don't block democracy. Just vote—today. We can vote on this up or down. We can vote on it. Don't obstruct; just vote. You want to make a motion, you want to vote, a majority vote, fine. Let's vote. But don't force a filibuster and don't object and don't threaten a filibuster. Just vote. We are happy to vote.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST H.R. 4851

Mr. President, at this point, 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, and that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. Reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I think my colleague realizes that, in fact, this will add \$9.2 billion to the debt, and she also realizes, in spite of her claim that we could vote, that there is nobody in town to vote because there are only 10 or 11 of us still in town. And because every Republican voted against adjourning so that we could stay and work this out, I would object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, could you indicate the time remaining on our side for this portion?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. In this block of time, the Senator has no time remaining.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, let me set the record straight. Yesterday in this body we offered the same bill in a way that would not increase the debt. It was immediately tabled, with all Republicans voting not to table it and the majority voting to table it. So there is a little bit of confusion.

We worked out an agreement with Senator STABENOW and Senator LEVIN from Michigan where we came together with an agreement for 2 weeks where this would be paid for, so the reason this bill is not moving forward is because the House leadership rejected that compromise. In other words, we

had a compromise. We developed a plan where our children will not pay for this, we will, by offsetting and not adding to the debt.

With that, I wish to recognize my colleague from Wyoming, Senator BARRASSO, for what time he might consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it was fascinating to be here in the Senate Chamber this morning when first the Senator from Iowa made the statement, "I'm all for paying for things."

I am all for paying for things? But not for this. Not for that. Not for the next thing.

Watching the Senator's voting record, it seems that everything is an emergency. He certainly does not seem to want to be paying for anything, just add it to the debt.

Mr. COBURN. Will the Senator yield for a moment.

He talked about a tornado in Oklahoma. When the Oklahoma City bombing happened and we sent emergency funds to Oklahoma City, we paid for them. We decreased spending somewhere else to pay for that spending. His point falls on a flat wall because when we had an urgency such as that in 1995, we paid for it.

Mr. BARRASSO. I heard the Senator, my good friend from Michigan, a few minutes ago say it is the United States versus China. My good friend from Michigan said we are laser focused on China and that China is spending money every day to beat us.

I think the problem is the government in Washington is spending money every day—the taxpayers' money, money we do not have, and that is what is going to beat us. It is money irresponsibly being spent by this government in this city, voted on time and time again by a Washington government that doesn't live within its means, doesn't do what the States in this country do, where we do live within our means. I served in the Wyoming Senate where we did balance the budget. The Governor had a line-item veto. We had to balance our budget. It is the spending by us in the United States that is going to lead to China beating us, not money being spent in China every day.

That is why on the front page of the Wall Street Journal today, above the fold, right there, Wall Street Journal, Friday, March 26, 2010, "Debt Fears Send Rates Up." The fear of the debt is sending rates up.

What it means is people do not think we are responsible in the way we are living. We are not living within our means. We are not doing what a family does in this country, where a family says we have to live within our means. When the Senator from Iowa says you can't go down and get an extended line of credit if you have already tapped your credit, this country continues to do it. Washington continues to overspend and not live within its means.

The amount of spending being done, often under the guise of saying it is an emergency, has been irresponsible, unsustainable, and my concern is it will soon be irreversible.

I believe in this country. I believe in America. We are a strong nation. We are a resilient nation. We are a proud nation. And we are a nation that has faced down some of history's most vicious tyrants, we have faced down some of the most incredible obstacles, challenging obstacles, and we have risen to the occasion time and time again.

Today, here we are, faced with many challenges, none of which is too large or too difficult for the American people to overcome. But the President of the United States has determined the people cannot be trusted to overcome the obstacles we face. Instead, here in Washington, Democrats believe the government continues to be the answer. I am here to tell you that government is not the answer. The government is the problem.

Americans have been promised transparency, accountability, hope, and change. Instead, what the American people have been given is irresponsible and unsustainable spending, along with unthinkable government intervention into nearly every aspect of our lives. This country needs an economic environment where people, where individuals, where families, where businesses can recover and thrive. What the administration has done is give us more bureaucracy and more debt and it is going to get worse now that the health care bill has been signed into law. To make matters worse, this government in Washington is sending the bill to our children and our grandchildren.

Look at the proposals that are ahead of us here—costly cap-and-trade proposals which are going to raise costs and raise energy prices for American families, government-run health care, irresponsible bailouts of every industry in sight, one takeover after another, where government says we know better than the American people.

Government is wrong. I have great concern that people here in Washington are completely out of touch with what is happening in the real world. I go home to Wyoming every weekend. I am going today. That is the best way to do it, to go home and listen to people who have to balance their checkbooks, people who have to live within their means, and then visit with State legislators who know when they go to the capitals of their respective States that the States have to live within their means, balance their budget, don't overspend, tighten the belt, cut spending if we need to.

Watching this debate in the last couple of weeks with health care, having practiced medicine for 25 years, we need to focus on the overall health of people as well as the economy, because if people cannot put food on the table or a roof over their head, no matter what additional bill is passed in Wash-

ington—which spends more money—that is not going to make it easier for the families of America. Spending billions to combat global warming—global warming—billions, it seems senseless for somebody who is retired and can't afford to heat their home in the Wyoming winter.

There was a time when our leaders recognized that America's most valuable asset was the American people. I continue to believe that. There is a reason the preamble to our Constitution begins with, "We the people," not "You, the people." Our forefathers created a system of government through which free Americans get to decide their own fate. Today the very fabric of America is in danger of being tattered beyond repair, and every time I go home, as I travel around the State of Wyoming, people continue to tell me we are losing our country. I am not the only one who is hearing it. When Senators, when Representatives go home—and many of us do go home every weekend—we are hearing it State by State. Those Members of Congress who choose to not go home, to not go visit with the people they represent, to not hold town meetings because they are told by leadership don't go listen to the people, listen to us—those are the kinds of people who continue to vote for irresponsible spending.

I am hoping Members go home over the upcoming Eastertime, go home and listen to people in their own home communities who will say Washington needs to live by the same rules families in America live by—live within your means. American families know what it means to live within your means.

Since the beginning of this crisis, Americans have been forced to make some very difficult choices and to tighten our belts. Financially stressed Americans balance budgets for food, for gas, for electricity, for tuition, for clothing, rent, mortgage payments, and much more. When your neighbor maxes out the limit on their credit card they are keenly aware this is a clear indication of a spending problem. They cannot call the credit card company and simply say increase the credit limit. Unfortunately, we know Washington is not your average consumer. President Obama said it best. He said:

In the long run we can't continue to spend as if deficits don't have consequences, as if waste does not matter, as if the hard earned tax dollars of the American people can be treated like monopoly money.

Let me repeat that. This is President Obama who said last year, right before Christmas, "We can't continue to spend as if the hard earned tax dollars of the American people can be treated like monopoly money. That's what we have seen time and time again." He said "Washington has become more concerned about the next election than the next generation."

Those on this side of the aisle are most concerned about our economy, our Nation, jobs, growth, opportunity, the families of this country. This is a

long-term problem and it must be addressed in the short term. We cannot afford to wait. We cannot continue to call everything emergency spending without paying for it.

The American people are demanding action. Time and again Washington's insatiable appetite for spending is met with more of the same. Only in Washington can you max out the country's credit card at \$14 trillion and simply keep on spending. Unlike your average American, Washington has refused to make the tough choices needed to rein in unsustainable deficits we are now facing. Since we are not making the tough choices, the cost of handling the debt is continuing to go up. Interest rates are rising which means the amount of money that is going to go to pay that debt will continue to rise. Yet we are looking at a deficit that continues to rise, \$1 trillion a year, all the way through 2020, and a Presidential budget that will double the national debt in 5 years and triple it in 10.

The current national deficit for this fiscal year is \$1.4 trillion. That is three times the previous record high. As I said, according to the budget projections, the deficit is going to be close to \$1 trillion a year through 2020. This budget deficit is simply appalling. All you need to do is go home, have a townhall meeting, listen to people. People around the country are incensed with this sort of reckless, wasteful Washington spending.

The worst part is people do not believe they are getting value for their money. In a recent poll, of every \$1 you send to Washington in taxes, how much do you think is being wasted? The American public said 50 cents on every dollar sent to Washington in taxes is being wasted. That is an all-time record high number. People are not seeing that Washington is being responsible in how taxpayer dollars are being used and the American people simply do not believe they are getting value for their money.

I agree, the people are not getting value for their money. All you need to do is look at the Washington wasteful spending and it is no surprise that the American people are incredibly upset. Year after year, monstrous deficits are leading us to a national debt crisis. In 2009 alone, the public debt grew 31 percent. It now is almost half of the gross domestic product. By 2020 it is expected to balloon to over 70 percent of the gross domestic product.

So when I look at this and I talk to people at home and I think about this and I look at the great threats, the great threats to our Nation, to me the debt is the threat. As a result, I take a look at this major spending bill, the so-called stimulus package—which was supposed to keep unemployment down below 9 percent and said if you didn't pass it, it might go to 9 percent—they passed it, and it still went to 10 percent. Do you know only 1 in 16 Americans believes it actually created jobs.

The President is out there saying it created jobs, traveling around the country, and only 1 in 16 Americans believes it. That is how severe this problem is.

With that, I see my part of the time has expired and I wish to turn the remainder of this time over to Senator COBURN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to set a little bit of a tone. First, I thank the Senator from Michigan. Yesterday, it was through her work and Senator LEVIN's work that we were able to come to an agreement on a compromise in the Senate. I think that shows when we get down to issues we can work together; when we get to the position. It was her efforts, along with several others, that allowed us to reach that compromise.

But I wanted to make a point—a couple of points. No. 1, there is nobody on our side who does not want to extend the unemployment benefits. The difference is we want to extend them without hurting her future. Whether you are a conservative, liberal, Democrat, Republican, or an Independent, the consequences of our actions are going to affect everybody. I used this last year, and this little girl is saying: I am already \$38,375 in debt, and I only own a dollhouse.

Well, let me show you what is going to happen this year. This year alone, she is \$45,000 in debt. We moved from \$39,000 to \$45,000 for every man, woman, and child in this country. That only reflects the outstanding debt we do not owe ourselves, that we have stolen from Social Security and that we have stolen from other trust funds, that we put in an IOU.

There is another thing that is happening that Americans should be aware of. In the past year, the average interest rates on the debt obligations we are issuing have risen 1 percent. So we have \$12.8 trillion worth of debt. Multiply that by 1 percent, and in this next year we are going to pay an extra \$128 billion in interest just from that 1 percent.

So for every 1 percent interest rates go up, we have interest costs of \$128 billion. What will happen as we continue to project trillion-dollar deficits over the next 9 years is, that is going to rise and rise and rise.

She is the one that is going to pay for that, and this will not be \$45,000; it will be \$75,000. Then it will be \$85,000, and then pretty soon—and by the way, that only reflects the debt. That has no reflection on the unfunded commitments that we have made to veterans, social security benefits, Medicare, none.

If we add those in, we have another \$37 trillion that has to be accounted for just over the next four decades. So debt is a big problem for us. I would also make a point, the Senator from Michigan mentioned the long-term debt extender that we have. It is 12 months. It is going down each time we do it. We

sent that to the House. You know what. It did not increase the debt because we offset it. We paid for it.

So the House has a bill the Senate has passed that was paid for, and they stole some of the pay-fors for the health care bill. So the House has not sent it back because the House refuses to make the hard choices to pay for the things that are necessary to be done right now. That is what happened yesterday. The Senate came to an agreement. We decided we would pay for 2 weeks so nobody will have any hitch in their unemployment, no hitch in their COBRA, no hitch anywhere. When it was sent over there, it was rejected.

Now, I want to posit something to you. The reason it was rejected is we do not want to create the precedent that when we spend money we have to pay for it. Where in the world is that a normal thinking process? In other words, we want to make sure we always have the option to spend money that is not paid for. There could be nothing more economically unreasonable than that.

So this is not a battle about not wanting to help the people who need our help today, this is a battle about helping the people who need our help today without hurting the children of tomorrow, without rescuing them.

If we are talking about emergencies, the fact is, because we cannot control our appetite for spending, our interest costs have gone up another \$128 billion this year. That is an emergency. The other thing is that we have over \$300 billion worth of waste, of fraud, of duplication in the Federal Government every year. So if you dispute it, you can say there is only—let's say it is half that. Why would we not get rid of that and pay for this rather than charge this intermediate \$9.2 billion to those little children?

I actually had the pleasure of meeting this little girl in my office after I saw this photo. She has parents. They are worried. So what is her future going to be like? Is she going to have the same opportunity I have? So what I would posit forth is that we can do both. We can meet the needs of those who are dependent upon us now because of the economic downturn, and we can protect her and all of those of her generation.

To not do so says we are going to take the easy way out. We are not going to act responsibly. We are not going to act like every other family in America acts. They look at what is there, what is the priority, what we can do, and what we cannot do. Then they make a decision about what is most important.

The process the Senator from Michigan wants us to do, even though she agreed yesterday, is to not put a priority on it that considers both the short term and the long term; that cares both for the children as well as the unemployed; that considers both the future of our country and her opportunity to take advantage of the freest Nation in the world.

This is not a Republican-Democrat thing. Republicans have been irresponsible in spending too. It is a whole new era now. Everything has changed. It does not matter what party we are in. If we do not get hold of the debt in this country, everyone is going to suffer.

I spoke on the Senate floor yesterday, and I will reiterate it: Whether you call it a filibuster or whether you call it obstruction, as a grandfather of five children, truly reflective of tons of grandparents out there and tons of grandkids out there, I am not going to agree in the future to spend money we do not have until we get rid of the things that are not a priority, the \$300 billion, before we move. Someone has to start saying no to the addiction we have that every time we have a problem we will just spend money.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4915

I would like to make a unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to H.R. 4915, a revenue measure from the House; provided that the only amendment in order be a substitute amendment, the text of which is the 2-week extension that we agreed on yesterday of unemployment benefits that is paid for, that will not increase the debt, with agreed-to offsets from the Finance Committee that was agreed to yesterday; proceeded further that the amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, with a motion to reconsider laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Reserving the right to object, I would just indicate to my colleague that from our perspective this is an emergency, an economic disaster for families right now. We need to do as we have done three other times in the Congress and extend this emergency spending to help families who are out of work.

Given that, I will object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I am sorry we have an objection. The fact is, we agreed to it. The fact is, the Senator from Michigan is having to protect the House of Representatives. She knows we are not going to go forward with this unless we pay for that, until we get back.

The only way to do that is through unanimous consent. The only way we are going to accomplish that is what we agreed to yesterday and send it to the House and let them do it by unanimous consent, even though they said they will not do it.

The fact is, we agreed in the Senate. We came to an agreement, and because the House has said they will not do it, they do not want to—they want to increase the debt to do it rather than to do it and not increase the debt. I think that speaks of where we are in the country.

We cannot do this. We have agreed on the way to do it in our body.

After we had an agreement yesterday that maybe the House did not like, it actually solved the problem and solved the problem for these little kids as well as those unemployed in Michigan and across the country. We now have the House saying: No, we cannot do it.

So I am sorry. I apologize to the Senator from Michigan for putting her in that position. I sincerely do. But I think we have to be recognizable of the fact that what looks like may be happening as both Houses recess is that it will not get done. It will not get done because we cannot get it done. It will not get done because the House refuses to take a position to not add to the debt as we solve this problem, as we meet both priorities—those people who are hurting and the priority of what is to come in the future. I think that is unfortunate for us.

I would yield the remaining time I have, which is only about 2 or 3 minutes, to the Senator from Georgia, and then I hope he will join me when we come back.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. I thank the Senator from Oklahoma. I will be here this morning to talk about this issue. I, too, just want to say to the Senator from Michigan, it is unfortunate that the Senate has tried to be responsible and react to the situation we are in from an unemployment insurance standpoint, and in a very responsible way, and, unfortunately, the House will not agree with us. I am one of the folks who has a great deal of sympathy for those folks who are unemployed, as do all other 99 Members of this body.

This is the fourth time we have sought to extend unemployment insurance for individuals across America. My State of Georgia has an unemployment rate of almost 10.5 percent. We have a lot of people who are hurting in a very significant way.

I voted last time, on March 2 I believe it was, to extend unemployment insurance without paying for it because I know the difficulties people are having. But I did it with the understanding that we had 30 days to fix it. We had 30 days to figure out a way to pay for it. Yet, instead of concentrating on ways to figure out a way to pay for it, last night, the Senator from Oklahoma was forced to raise an objection to the extension that is not paid for, so the majority decided: Well, maybe he is really serious about paying for it. Maybe the Republicans do want to see us pay for this rather than adding to the debt that our children and our grandchildren will inherit.

That is when serious discussions took place. I will come back with my colleague from Oklahoma and talk more about this later. I regret that the House has taken the action they have. It sends us down a continuing trail that we have been on in the Congress over the last several years. My colleague is right. Republicans have done this, just as Democrats have. Repub-

licans have not been as egregious about it as we have seen in the last year and a half, but it is an issue we have to get under control. Now is the time to do it. If we can't find a way to pay for \$9 billion worth of expenses, then it is Katy bar the door.

Today we borrow 43 cents out of every dollar the Federal Government spends. That is spending that is out of control. I look forward to continuing this dialog as we turn the discussion over to the other side. We will come back in a little while and talk more about it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to my distinguished colleague, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the terrific senior Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. I wonder if Senator CHAMBLISS might stay for 1 second so I can inform my Republican colleagues, in about 10 minutes I will be asking unanimous consent to confirm a general who has been nominated—a brigadier general who has been nominated to be a major general, who has been stuck on this calendar since October because of the objection of Senator VITTER, who is not hiding that it is totally unrelated to the merits of this general. He acknowledges that. Senator VITTER has acknowledged that his problem is with the Corps of Engineers. This is a Corps of Engineers that has nothing to do with the projects Senator VITTER is trying to get funded. The Corps of Engineers has said it is illegal to proceed. They have written him back. The hold still stands. This is a uniformed officer of the U.S. Government. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I feel obligated—and the reason I interrupted your mission, forgive me, is because it is a Senate Armed Services Committee matter, where we have unanimously approved him 6 months ago or 5 months ago to be a major general.

I want to put folks on notice. I will be making a unanimous consent request in about 10 minutes that this matter be taken off the calendar and that it be confirmed. I wanted, as a courtesy, to make sure folks on that side of the aisle knew.

I thank my dear friend from Michigan, my colleague, Senator STABENOW, for yielding me this time. I know later on this morning or early this afternoon there will be a unanimous consent request that unemployment benefits be extended, that a bill be adopted. It is critically important that unanimous consent request be approved. I will speak now for a few minutes on that matter.

We have thousands of people in our State of Michigan who have lost jobs thanks to a crisis that was created in mortgage company boiler rooms and Wall Street board rooms. Now they are suffering because of the failure of our Republican colleagues to understand the emergency situation—I want to

focus on the word “emergency”—of those who have lost their jobs because of that crisis. It should not be hard to deliver much needed aid to people who are facing an emergency crisis. We have an unemployment rate in the country that is approximating 10 percent. We have an unemployment rate in Michigan that is over 14 percent. People need us to do what is right and to extend these benefits.

Here we are, up against a wall of obstructionism again, while thousands of our constituents, people in every State, wonder what it is exactly we are doing that we would deny the extension of unemployment benefits when we have a deep recession. Hopefully, we may be coming out. There is some evidence we may be coming out, but not for this record number of people who will lose their unemployment benefits if we don't act.

This is not an abstract policy debate. These are real lives which are hanging in the balance. We have more than a half million Michiganders receiving unemployment benefits. We have 125,000 Michiganders who will lose their unemployment benefits by the end of April, if we do not act. Unemployed breadwinners will continue to receive benefits only if we can find the will and the decency to act on their behalf—real people, real families coping with enormous problems. Denying this extension is simply inhumane. It is more than the families. We could talk about that. We can talk about the economy, which also benefits from these unemployment benefits. In fact, economists tell us—this has been extensively documented—that government payments, such as unemployment benefits, are among the most effective forms of economic stimulus. Not providing that stimulus has a negative effect on the entire economy. But that is not the point I wish to reinforce this morning. It is the fact that we have an emergency in millions of homes, and that emergency needs to be recognized as such. If it is—and I hope our Republican colleagues would agree—we then do not have to have the offsets which we would if it is not designated as an emergency.

Our Republican colleagues tell us they are in favor of an extension, but they argue it should be offset with cuts in other programs. In fact, one of the programs they look to for an offset is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act or the stimulus package. It is a pretty ironic place to look since that package is a job creator. So in order to do the right thing and extend unemployment benefits, some of our Republican colleagues argue—and I guess continue to believe—we should take funds from a stimulus package, which most economists say is creating jobs, in order to pay for the extension of jobless benefits. If there is any wrong place to look for offsets, that would be it.

The main point is not that it is the wrong offset. The main point is, every single time we have extended benefits,

we have seen in this body that it is an emergency.

On June 30, 2008, in a 2008 Supplemental Appropriations Act, we deemed the extension of unemployment benefits an emergency. It was designated as an emergency on June 30, 2008. Then when we funded unemployment benefits on February 17, 2009, we designated that extension cost as an emergency. December 19, 2009, when we extended benefits, this time in a Defense Appropriations Act, it was designated an emergency. On March 2, a few weeks ago, it was designated as an emergency. Is the emergency over? Is this recession over? Is that what Republican objections are suggesting? It is no longer an emergency? It has been an emergency since 2008, but that is all over now?

I don't think the American people see it that way. I think the American people see what is happening in their families, in their homes, a crisis that continues to exist with record levels of unemployment.

I hope we will be able today to persuade our Republican colleagues they should not object to the extension of benefits and to continue to declare the situation in which we find ourselves as an emergency, since it so clearly is.

I ask the Presiding Officer how much time I have remaining.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. May I have 2 additional minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Yes.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, back in October—to be precise, October 27, so we have now almost 5 months—almost 5 months ago, the Armed Services Committee unanimously approved the nomination of BG Michael Walsh to be a major general. This is a man who has had an exemplary career in the military. He has been there 30 years in the Corps of Engineers. He served in command assignments throughout the United States, throughout the world. In 2006–2008, Brigadier General Walsh served in Baghdad. He was commander of the Gulf Region Division of the Army Corps of Engineers. He was responsible for reconstruction projects managed by the corps throughout Iraq. Prior to that tour, Brigadier General Walsh served as commander of the Army Corps's South Atlantic Division. He served in places as far afield as Germany and Saudi Arabia.

We approved this unanimously in the committee. There is no doubt about this general's qualifications and his character. No one has raised the slightest issue as to whether he should be approved based on his own merits. Instead, the objection is, the Corps of Engineers has not approved a number of projects Senator VITTER wants the corps to approve.

It is inappropriate to stop a uniformed officer of the United States

from having an advancement in his career because a Senator believes the Corps of Engineers, where this general served, should approve projects which the corps has said it cannot approve. Even if it wanted to, it can't approve them. The funds have not been appropriated. They have written Senator VITTER that it is illegal for them to approve these projects, as well as being against their policy. I don't want to get into the question of whether it is legal or whether it is the right policy to approve three projects which Senator VITTER thinks are important. That is not the issue.

This general could not approve those projects if he wanted to. It is not his job. That comes from higher up. All he does is execute projects which the corps approves.

This is the situation. For 5 months, we have a uniformed officer of the United States whose career is being interfered with in this way, whose advancement is being interfered with because there is a hold on this nomination from one Republican Senator.

I have urged the leadership on the other side to weigh in on this. By the way, Senator MCCAIN, my ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, supports what I am doing. I want Republicans to realize this. The ranking member of the Armed Services Committee is joining me in making this unanimous consent request. This was a unanimously approved nomination. He loses pay. He loses rank. His career is interrupted. Why should this kind of unfairness be perpetrated on a uniformed member of the U.S. Army because one Republican Senator can't get the projects he thinks he should get for his State?

That is what it comes down to. This is one of the purest forms of inappropriate obstructionism I have seen here. As chairman of the committee, I am simply not going to stand by without trying my best to change this.

I hope my friends will not object, but I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination on the Executive Calendar, Calendar No. 526, BG Michael Walsh, to be major general; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume where it was.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. Reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I must say to my colleague, I agree with him—what he said—but under the conventions that we use, Senators can ask others to object on their behalf, and, regrettably, I have been asked to do that and will do that on Senator VITTER's behalf.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEVIN. I deeply regret that, and I am going to continue to press forward

on this. I hope the leadership on the Republican side will weigh in on this.

I yield the floor, and I thank my friend.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank my colleague for his extraordinary leadership on the Armed Services Committee and his efforts to make sure we have the staff, the leadership in our Department of Defense, our military, on behalf of our troops. It is very regrettable that once again we are seeing obstructionism, blocking us from moving forward.

I do not know the exact number now, but I know we have over 70 different positions that are being held up. They have been held up, many of them, for over a year now in the Obama administration—many related to jobs, to commerce, to trade, to the Department of Defense—and it continues to be part of what we are seeing over and over and over again in efforts to just function, have government be able to function.

Mr. President, for so long—I know there are all the politics of people believing they can gain points because of debating whether government is good or bad, whether it is the problem, whether it is the solution—I think the majority of the American people just want it to work well. They want us to work together, and they want the services that are to be provided, whether it is supporting our troops in the military, whether it is providing education for our children, whether it is police officers on the street, whether it is making sure the water our children drink is safe, or whatever it is. They want it to work well and make sure every dollar we are spending on their behalf is spent with them in mind and it is done well and we are doing it efficiently and effectively.

I do have to say, in looking at the beautiful picture of the child my friend from Oklahoma held up—talking about children and the future—this week, we completed a process that will make sure it is illegal to block that child from getting health insurance because of a preexisting condition. I wish our colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle had chosen to join with us in that very important effort to make sure every child can receive the health insurance they need, that every parent can have freedom from the fear that when they go to bed at night they are not going to have to say one more time: Dear God, please don't let the kids get sick because I don't know what I am going to do.

So we do care about those children. We have put into place a health insurance reform plan that is going to make sure every pregnant mom gets prenatal care and has maternity care, which in a majority of private-sector insurance plans you can go out and buy for yourself, they do not cover it. I am happy to have a discussion about children and about making sure they can afford to go to college, which was also in the bill

we passed this week—providing more opportunity for children. I am happy to have that discussion.

But it is amazing to me we continue to be lectured by the people who got us into this mess because of their economic policies. We are now lectured on probably a daily basis about the size of the deficit. We understand that. I was very proud to be in the House of Representatives when President Clinton and the Democrats balanced the budget for the first time in 30 years. When I came into the Senate, the big debate was what to do about the surplus. We were looking at almost a \$6 trillion surplus over 10 years. Well, unfortunately, under President Bush, under a Republican Congress, that went away pretty fast: by not paying for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans—somehow that was OK—by not paying for a prescription drug effort under Medicare. During those 8 years, somehow it did not matter there was a credit card being run up, that a huge surplus that had been accumulated through tough decisions, very tough choices, in the 1990s was somehow squandered away. So I have a hard time hearing over and over again about the deficit and being lectured as if somehow President Obama or the Democrats caused that deficit.

I am not saying we do not have a challenge right now and a huge hole, and that we are not in a situation where we need to do emergency spending because of this economic disaster that has gone on. I understand that. I understand we are currently in a situation to be forced into a position because there are no savings to help people. Now we are in a deficit position. But I find it interesting that all of a sudden, when we are in a situation where middle-class families need help—all of a sudden, when working people in this country need help—this is an issue, when it was not an issue for 8 years during the Bush administration. That is what I find difficult.

We have put back in place the budget rules that were in place during the Clinton years, and we are going to dig ourselves out of this deficit. We passed a health insurance reform bill that over the next two decades is going to decrease the deficit by over \$1.2 trillion. We know there is a hole. We understand that. But we also understand that middle-class families—who are under the crunch, who are losing their jobs, who are trying to figure out how to pay the bills—did not cause that, and the solutions being proposed now would put it right on their backs. That is what we say no to. Because it is about time, as people in my State say, we focus on the rest of us. What about the rest of us in this country—not just those in the privileged, few powerful positions, the people on Wall Street? That is what this is about. This is fundamentally a debate about that. That is what we are talking about today.

I also want to indicate what we are talking about is extending an emer-

gency program put in place in 2008 because of the economic disaster that families are facing. It is not the regular unemployment program. It is what was put in place in 2008 because of job loss, because of the fact that we got to a point where we are losing 600,000, 700,000, 800,000 jobs a month. That is a disaster as much as a hurricane, a flood, or anything else that could happen to families and communities.

Since that time, we have extended it—as we are asking to extend it—on four different occasions. We are asking right now for at least 2 weeks until the long-term extension gets passed by the House. For 2 weeks let us extend it, or 30 days. Let us extend it so there is not a gap in coverage, so we do not have families, who are feeling stress already, now reading in the papers that the unemployment extension is going to stop and trying to figure out what in the world they are going to do during this period of time. We are asking for 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 4 weeks to be able to extend it until the House is able to pass the long-term extension.

We are right back where we were again: objection, objection, objection on being able to do that—more objections than we have ever had in the history of our country in terms of process. We find ourselves in a situation where, even though we have not adjourned—I will emphasize that: Senator REID, the majority leader, did not adjourn. We could have votes. I realize people have left. We could have voted last night. We wanted to vote last night. Our only option to overcome this was to start a process to stop a filibuster, which takes 2 days and voting and 30 hours, and all of this, and they know that. So we could have voted last night: yes or no. We could have done that last night. But, once again, as we have had 130 different times, we are in a situation where there has been objection, objection, objection.

This is very much about priorities. My friends on the other side of the aisle talk about priorities. Yes, this is about priorities. It is about values. And it is about who you are fighting for. Fundamentally, it is about who you are fighting for. I can tell you, the people in Michigan—hard-working people, middle-class Americans, families who care deeply about this country; they love this country—are tired of decisions being made for a few at the top. They are tired of the games and the obstructionism that has gone on and on and on. They want us to get things done—real things that affect their lives. That is what they want to have us get done.

I see my distinguished friend from Rhode Island on the floor—a champion on this issue, a fighter for Rhode Island, working men and women, and someone who has been on this floor over and over again fighting to make sure people who are out of work through no fault of their own have the opportunity to receive some help, some short-term help.

I now yield to my friend from Rhode Island up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I thank Senator STABENOW.

We are here to attempt to extend unemployment benefits for a brief period of time so Americans do not get caught up in the expiration of these benefits on April 5. This has been a repeated struggle. We have had many incidents over the last several months where we have had to come down here and, at the last moment, attempt to project these benefits further. I hope we do not fail again today.

In 2009, when President Obama walked into office, we were losing 700,000 jobs per month. This is a crisis of epic proportions, rivaling, in some respect, in some regions of the country, the Great Depression. In my home State of Rhode Island, we have a 12.7-percent unemployment rate, and it has been persistent now for almost 2 years. We are seeing an unfortunate record of long-term unemployment. We have to help our colleagues, our neighbors, our friends, and we have to do it in a way that does not deny them the basic necessities to hang on in a difficult economy.

But this situation is not just as a result of the last several months or the last several years. If you look back across the past decade—from 2000 to 2010—it has been an extraordinarily unproductive one for working Americans. There has been zero net job creation since December 1999. We have had no decade since the 1940s where job growth was less than 20 percent. This is the culmination of a decade in which people could not find the kind of work they typically found in America. We saw middle-income households' earning power decline. They were making less in 2008 than they were in 1999. Two-thirds of the Nation's total income from 2002 to 2007 flowed to the top 1 percent.

So middle-income families have been losing out persistently, and now they have hit the skids because so many of them now are seeing their jobs go, seeing their house threatened with foreclosure, seeing the dream of sending their children to college evaporate. At least the minimum we can do is provide the kind of assistance they need.

We routinely, when there is a natural disaster, provide assistance. In the last 20 years, an estimated \$336 billion in disaster assistance and \$61.8 billion in agricultural assistance has flowed to the States. This is a disaster in the same respect. It is a disaster to individual families who have lost their employment.

The irony here is, if a flood had washed through a State in the Union and destroyed the work of 12 percent of the population, we would be here with disaster relief to get the funds to give loans, to give support, et cetera. Well, this is a disaster. We must move.

In that respect, seeing my time is coming to a close, the time I have—

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I would be happy to give the Senator some additional time, and we will roll the time off of your later time, if you would like time now, I say to the Senator.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oklahoma. Let me take 1 or 2 more minutes. That is extremely thoughtful. I thank the Senator.

We have an opportunity to act today, and we should. The proposal is to go ahead and to extend through the next several days the existing benefits so we have time to come back. We have already sent to the House an extension of unemployment benefits that will carry through to the end of this calendar year. It also includes FMAP provisions, which are extremely important to States. I think in the spirit of letting us continue to support these Americans while we debate and finally conclude, I hope successfully, a longer term solution is the best thing to do.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4501

My colleague Senator STABENOW an hour ago propounded a unanimous consent request, only to receive an objection. I will once again ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 323, H.R. 4501, to provide a temporary extension of certain programs, that the bill be read three times, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, again, I would note this is the fourth time I have done this and, regrettably, because we had an agreement yesterday that the House would not go along with, I have to object because we will be adding to the debt.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I appreciate the Senator's objection. Additionally, I appreciate his consideration in allowing me to speak.

Let me conclude. We have a huge debt at the moment. I think if you look at the major contributing factors of that debt, they would include tax cuts that were unpaid for, supported strongly by the Republicans, which went dramatically to the richest Americans, and two wars that have been unpaid for. In fact, I think in a few weeks we are going to have to consider another supplemental Defense budget which at this point I do not believe is paid for and which I do not feel will engender any objection by the Republican side. It will include, given the nature of counterinsurgency operations, monies that will be used, ironically, to help develop productive jobs and build clinics and do things our soldiers must do to secure the peace in Afghanistan and Iraq. Yet at the same time we can't find that kind of money here without on offset to help Americans.

So there is a question of priorities. There is a question of the deficit. Again, repeating something my col-

league said, I too recall when we had a surplus. That was under the leadership of President Clinton. There were tough votes by my colleagues and myself. That surplus has dissipated. We are now in a severe situation with the deficit. The compelling priorities of Americans who need to work and can't find it yet are extremely persuasive and should be responded to by the success of the bill.

I again thank the Senator from Oklahoma. He is extraordinarily kind.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, since the majority took an additional 5 minutes of our time, that our original unanimous consent be changed to give us the time from 11:05 to 12:05, and the majority from 12:05 to 12:30.

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

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I yield to Senator CHAMBLISS at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, first, let me thank my colleague from Oklahoma for highlighting this issue and for reaching a point where the American people have wanted us to be for some time, and that is to simply look at the spending that is going on in Washington and say enough is enough. That if we are going to continue down the road of increasing Federal spending, then we have to offset that additional Federal spending that is over and above the amount of revenues coming in.

I also wish to say to my friend from Michigan, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, who made the request on the approval of the promotion of a general that, as he knows, I have already voted in favor of doing that one time within the committee. I regret we are having to stand up and object. However, as he well knows, that is part of the process here, so Senator COBURN had to object on behalf of another Member of the Senate.

I can't help but note, as we are talking about spending here, an article that appeared in this morning's Washington Times. The caption in the article is "CBO Report: Debt Will Rise to 90 Percent of GDP."

The article reads:

President Obama's fiscal 2011 budget will generate nearly \$10 trillion in cumulative budget deficits over the next 10 years, \$1.2 trillion more than the administration projected, and raise the Federal debt to 90 percent of the Nation's economic output by 2020, according to the Congressional Budget Office. In its 2011 budget, which the White House Office of Management and Budget released February 1, the administration projected a 10-year deficit total of \$8.53 trillion. After looking it over, CBO said in its final analysis released Thursday that the President's budget would generate a combined \$9.75 trillion in deficits over the next decade.

This is exactly why, with the leadership of the Senator from Oklahoma, we

have to address this issue of spending and why we have to get this issue of spending under control. No time is better suited to do this than now. We are looking at a deficit, according to the independent Congressional Budget Office, of \$10 trillion over the next 10 years.

The majority is saying we can't find \$9 billion to offset this particular bill that everybody agrees is needed and that everybody on both sides of the aisle wishes to see enacted. Very simply stated, the Republicans want to see the bill paid for. If we can't find \$9 billion in Federal spending that is out there today to offset this bill, how in the world are we going to be able to do anything other than, under the current leadership, go down this road of seeing nearly \$10 trillion in budget deficits accumulate over the next 10 years?

Congress has an obligation to serve as custodian of the American taxpayer dollar. When we engage in unchecked deficit spending, it has a long-lasting, negative impact on all Americans.

I understand times are tough across the country. As I said earlier, in my home State of Georgia, the unemployment rate announced last month was 10.4 percent. There is a new number coming out today. I suspect it is going to be at least that high. Georgians are hurting, and I am concerned about that. That is why I wish to make sure we can extend this unemployment insurance but to do so without paying for it, in my opinion, is reckless at this point in time and it would not be in the best interests of all Americans to extend it without paying for it.

The fact is, as I said earlier, I voted to extend it without paying for it back in the early part of March. The reason I did was because it was with the understanding that the majority had 30 days to work with the minority to try to find the offsets. When did the discussions on what those offsets would be begin? They began last night about 2 hours before we finally decided it was time to go home. To the credit of the Presiding Officer as well as others on the Majority side in a leadership role, they agreed with the Republican party, the Republican Members of this Senate, that we should offset it and we could offset it. That was objected to by Speaker PELOSI. So, unfortunately, here we are today in a situation where we are arguing about \$9 billion and looking at a proposed deficit from this administration of \$10 trillion over the next 10 years.

The American people are as upset as they can be with Congress, and rightfully so. The main reason they are upset with us is because of this very issue. When I am back home, which is where I go every weekend, and I visit with folks, whether it is in the grocery store, whether it is at church or within the business community, every constituent at some point in the conversation about what is happening in Washington will bring up the issue of Federal spending and why in the world

Members of Congress don't take some action to get this spending under control. There has never been a better time to do it than with this particular bill, and there has never been an easier time to do it. We are not talking about \$1 trillion; we are talking about \$9 billion in offsets, in reductions in Federal spending, in waste, fraud, and abuse that we all know is out there, in whatever area we can agree on that the money would come from. As we know, we have already identified some areas where we can reduce Federal spending to pay this.

Now is the time to do it. I would simply say to my colleague from Oklahoma, I commend him for being firm. I commend him for being in a leadership role on this issue. I am very pleased to stand with him to say that now is the time to do it. I think we should find that \$9 billion.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Georgia. I ask unanimous consent to have a colloquy on our side between the Members who are here. If there is no objection, I wish to proceed with that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. STABENOW). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COBURN. I recognize the Senator from Florida and the Senator from Alabama to start that off. I yield to the Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I appreciate the leadership Senator COBURN has shown. We need to focus on the seriousness of the issue and all that is at stake—why it is important and how it can be done. It's not impossible to pay for this bill and provide these benefits without adding to the debt of the country by containing other spending. There is no reason we can't do this. I thought last night we had reached an agreement that would actually have achieved that, but we were not able to.

Let me briefly restate the posture we are in. Senator GRASSLEY offered an amendment a few days ago to extend unemployment insurance for 30 days. It also would include a doctors payment so they don't get cut for their Medicare work; COBRA benefits, FMAP benefits, and other things. He offered that measure, but our Democratic colleagues blocked it. Now, the amendment was paid for. He had an offset, which was I think mostly unspent stimulus money that still remains available to us to spend on this kind of activity. Then yesterday Senator MCCONNELL reintroduced it. He sought to have the Grassley amendment come up for a vote that would have extended unemployment insurance and would have paid for it. That was voted down by our Democratic colleagues.

What I first wish to say to my colleagues who have been so vigorous—almost excessively so—in attacking the Republican side for not dealing with this issue is that we have offered two proposals to do so and they have been blocked. So it is not fair to say Repub-

licans don't want to do unemployment insurance. It is not fair to say that. To do it in an attacking fashion, and to attack those of us who are simply saying let's pay for it, as if we don't care about people who are unemployed, is offensive to me and I object.

I know what the deal is. Last night I thought we could reach an agreement on this but it fell apart. The Democratic leadership and Senator REID decided they will let it lapse, and then they will attack and blame Republicans for it.

I just do not think that is fair.

Let's get back to the critical issues that are at stake.

Senator CHAMBLISS mentioned that according to the Washington Times today, the Congressional Budget Office—the group we employ to help us understand these issues—says the publicly held debt of the United States will reach 90 percent of the gross domestic product by 2020. Why is that significant? First of all, it is above what Europe expects. They will not allow a country to enter the European Union if it has debt exceeding 60 percent of GDP.

More importantly, the Budget Committee had a professor testify from the University of Maryland who has written a book on this subject testify. She was asked by the Democratic chairman to provide expertise to the Budget Committee a couple of weeks ago. What she said is that when your debt reaches 90 percent of GDP, it impacts economic growth adversely. She said that with debt at 90 percent of GDP, the growth of our economy will be reduced by at least 1 percent. That is not a small amount.

As we know, 2-percent growth is not a bad thing to have. If you get 3 or 4 percent of GDP growth, you are moving along at a pretty good pace. In a mature economy you almost never get growth exceeding 3 or 4 percent of GDP on a sustained basis. If you are losing 1 percent of your growth, it could be 50 percent or 30 percent of the entire national growth that is being eliminated, pulled down. Why? Because we excessively spending money today, putting our debt off on our children and grandchildren into the future. That is going to make them less able to have a robust economy than they otherwise would have. People will pay. Nothing is created from nothing, as Julie Andrews taught us in that great song. Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could. Somebody is going to pay for this.

We are enjoying and celebrating today by spending money that is not ours. We do not have it in our bank account. We are having to go out and borrow. That is the problem that I believe is of great importance.

Get this, it has also been reported in the press that Berkshire Hathaway, Warren Buffett's company—I say to Senator LEMIEUX—can borrow money cheaper than the U.S. Government. The insurance, for those who want to

insure the money they loan to the government in case the U.S. Government does not pay it back, has tripled. Our annual deficit, as a percentage of GDP, is about 9.9 percent. The Greeks are in great trouble. Theirs is 12.9 percent of their economy. We are moving too close to that level. Remember, there are people who, when they buy a U.S. Treasury bond, insure themselves against the U.S. Treasury's failure to pay. They are paying three times today what they were paying just a few years ago because the U.S. Government's debt is not sound. Moody's, the company that rates the debt, continues to suggest they may downgrade our debt. This is because we are borrowing too much. It is time for us to put a stop to this and bring it under control.

We have offered several amendments that would fix the unemployment insurance and pay for it. Last night, a series of offsets were provided—offsets being things you could do to get the money out of current resources and expenditures instead of borrowing it.

Also, it is well known that all the money has not been expended in the \$800 billion stimulus plan. A lot of that money is not spent. The stimulus bill, when we passed it, was supposed to do a number of things. One was to deal with our crumbling bridges, our infrastructure, and one was unemployment insurance. That money has not been spent. Why don't we use it? If you don't use it, it allows that unspent money in the stimulus pot to be used as a slush fund to finance whatever other idea on which our leadership desires to spend it. That is what it is. Why won't we use it? Because they still want to use it on other things they have in their minds, of which I have not been fully informed.

I will say that I have a lot of county commissioners—and I assume the Senator from Florida has also—talking about roads and highways. I have to tell them how heartbroken I am that the stimulus legislation, which spent an incredible amount of money—\$800 billion—only spent 3 or 4 percent on highways and bridges. They are not feeling any growth of a significant nature in their infrastructure improvements. The advantages of money being spent on infrastructure are twofold. It absolutely creates a certain number of jobs. Perhaps not a huge number, but a certain number of jobs are absolutely created to do the construction work, to replace a bridge, to pave a road, or to fix a water sewer system.

Those are real jobs. But, more important, when you do that, you have accomplished something. You have obtained a tangible asset that benefits the people in that community and makes that community more productive. It also helps make our Nation more competitive because we have either built new infrastructure we needed or restored infrastructure we were going to have to restore anyway to keep up our productivity. Having so little of the money in the stimulus

package go to that sort of thing is one reason we have not seen growth in jobs.

It is particularly disheartening to me to think of how little permanent benefit we have gotten from the bill.

I see my colleague from Florida, Senator LEMIEUX, is here. One of the things he and I have talked about a lot—and I think it has been a bit of a shock to him since he has been here—is the extent to which our Nation is increasing our debt. I know he deeply, as a citizen legislator, cares about this situation. In his conversations with me, he has shared with me that is what he thinks is the biggest threat to our country. I know he wants to do everything he can to help us right this ship that is going in the wrong direction.

I am pleased to yield the floor at this time to Senator LEMIEUX.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore, The Senator from Florida.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I thank my friend and colleague from Alabama. Senator SESSIONS has been an outstanding leader on many issues but specifically on this issue of fighting against this debt. He and I often talk about these concerns. He comes to the floor, and he articulates these concerns so the American people can understand how dangerous this situation is. But he does not just come and talk about the problem; he offers real solutions to cap our spending, to find mechanisms to get this Congress on the right course.

As my friend mentioned, I am new to the Senate. I was appointed and came here in September of last year. My experience is in business and my experience is in State government back home in Florida. The comparisons to how Congress manages its money—your money—versus how a family does or a business does or even a State government does, those comparisons are striking because this is the only institution I have ever been a part of where we do not have to make ends meet, where we just spend money we do not have, where we never have a discussion about, well, if we raise this budget for this particular part of the money we spend, how much are we going to have to lower this budget. That discussion does not happen in the U.S. Congress.

In 2011, we are going to take in an estimated \$2.2 trillion in revenue from taxes—money that is coming from you, the American people—but we are going to spend \$3.8 trillion. That is like a family in my home State, say, in Ocala, who makes \$22,000 a year and they are going to spend \$38,000. Oh, by the way, they have \$1 million in debt. It is unsustainable.

The way the American people run their families, the way businesses have to run their budgets, the way State governments that are constitutionally required to balance their budgets have to cut spending in tough times—we do not have those mechanisms in this body, and we do not have enough people, such as Senator SESSIONS, Senator CHAMBLISS, my friend from Georgia,

and Senator COBURN from Oklahoma, who come to the floor and bring forth good ideas to talk about this spending problem.

This current bill to extend unemployment insurance and add money for doctors who give Medicare services—a lot of those folks in my State in Florida—and for money for COBRA, which is health care when you are unemployed, so government can put in that portion your employer would normally pay for—these are all good things. Every Member of this body, all 100 Senators, all 41 Members of the Republican side want to vote for this bill.

Last night, as my friend from Alabama said, we had a deal worked out with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to pay for this. What a novel idea: We are going to spend new money, and we are actually going to cut money from someplace else in the budget so we do not add to the deficit and the debt—shockingly good idea in Washington. But the deal fell apart because our friends in the House of Representatives, the Democratic leadership, would not agree to it.

Let me tell you, there is probably no State in the Union that needs this money more than Florida. I want to vote for it, but I cannot vote for it because it is not paid for.

My friend from Georgia just talked about the unemployment number that came out—more than 10 percent unemployment in Georgia. He has a new number coming out today. The number came out in Florida. We are at 12.2 percent unemployment announced today—12.2 percent, the worst unemployment in the history of keeping records in Florida. The second worst time was in 1973 to 1975, during that recession. There are 1,126,000 Floridians out of work. By the way, that is just the unemployed number. We know those who are underemployed—people who lost their jobs and now have to work part time and cannot get full-time employment—we know that number, if you add it with those who are unemployed, is probably 17, 18, 19 percent of the people.

When I go home to Florida and I am walking down the street, one out of every five people I see of working age and ability either does not have a job or does not have enough work. That is the issue on which we should be focused. But we cannot continue to pay for things here that we cannot afford. We cannot continue to burden our kids and the next generation with debt they will not be able to pay.

The hour of awakening and the hour we will be responsible and feel the impact for this spending is not just 5 or 10 years from now; it is now, it is today. Let me give an example.

Today in the Wall Street Journal, there is an article by Tom Lauricella. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this article in the Wall Street Journal.

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

[From the Wall St. Journal, Mar. 26, 2010]

DEBT FEARS SEND RATES UP

UNEASE AT DEFICIT HURTS DEMAND FOR TREASURYS; MORTGAGE COSTS ON THE RISE
(By Tom Lauricella)

A sudden drop-off in investor demand for U.S. Treasury notes is raising questions about whether interest rates will finally begin a march higher—a climb that would jack up the government's borrowing costs and spell trouble for the fragile housing market.

For months, investors have focused their attention on the debt crisis in Europe, but there are signs the spotlight is turning to the ability of the U.S. to finance its own budget deficit.

This week, some investors turned up their noses at three big U.S. Treasury offerings. Demand was weak for a \$44 billion 2-year-note auction on Tuesday, a \$42 billion sale of 5-year debt on Wednesday and a \$32 billion 7-year-note sale Thursday.

The poor demand, especially from foreign investors, sent the bonds' prices sharply lower and yields higher. It lifted the yield on the 10-year note to 3.9%—its highest since last June, and approaching the psychologically important 4% mark. That mark has been pierced only briefly since the financial crisis in 2008.

Investors' response marked a big shift from auctions in recent months in which major foreign buyers, such as central banks, had snapped up Treasuries. It could spell trouble for the U.S. housing market; the rates on many mortgages are linked to the yield on the 10-year note.

The move up in its yield coincides with the impending end of the Federal Reserve's program to support the mortgage market. The Fed has bought \$1.25 trillion of mortgage-backed securities, bolstering their prices and thus holding down their yields.

In just the past two days, the rate on 30-year Fannie Mae mortgage securities has risen to 4.5% from 4.3%. Once fees by lenders are tacked on, this means mortgage rates above 5%. Thomas Lawler, a housing economist, says some bigger lenders have already raised rates. Some were quoting 30-year mortgages at 5.125% Thursday morning, up from 4.875% earlier in the week, he said in a note to clients.

Concerns about the U.S. budget deficit are beginning to hurt the Treasury market, said Steve Rodosky, head of Treasury and derivatives trading at bond giant Pacific Investment Management Co. He said he is increasingly worried about the U.S. fiscal outlook.

In all, the U.S. government is expected to sell \$1.6 trillion in debt this year, including the \$118 billion sold this week.

There are some temporary factors behind the week's lackluster demand, such as a reluctance by Japanese investors to make new investments ahead of their fiscal year-end March 31.

While this could be just "noise" in the markets, "I think it involves a greater, long-term concern about deficits in the U.S., about Social Security being in a deficit," said Brian Fabbri, chief economist North America at BNP Paribas. "And all of the concerns about the U.S. have been heightened by concerns about Greece."

The jitters in Treasuries haven't spread to other markets. Stocks remain near 18-month highs. The Dow Jones Industrial Average came within 45 points of the 11000 mark on Thursday before falling back. It closed up 5.06 points at 10841.21.

Bruce Bittles, a strategist at R.W. Baird & Co., said he remains bullish on stocks for now. But he said if the yield on 10-year Treasuries creeps above 4%, that would be a signal to start dialing back his clients' stock holdings.

"In a debt-based economy like we have in the U.S., it doesn't take much of a hit from bond yields to cause some real pain," by raising costs to finance economic activity, he said.

The dollar has rallied, even as Treasuries have sold off. Usually, concerns about budget deficits send a currency lower. But investors appear to be betting on better prospects for a recovery in the U.S. than in Europe.

Adding to the focus on the Treasuries' woes has been an unusual development in an important, but usually ignored, market: interest-rate swaps. These common derivatives entail contracts that typically involve trading one stream of interest income for another. And in the past week, investors are being paid more to own U.S. Treasuries than U.S. corporate bonds.

This development "is causing a lot of people to start scratching their heads, trying to understand what's going on," said BNP's Mr. Fabbri. One explanation, he said, may be investors are more comfortable with the risks of owning bonds backed by U.S. corporations than the government. The big question is whether this slippage in demand for Treasuries will prove temporary or is the start of a trend.

For the most part, investors have taken at face value statements from Federal Reserve officials, including Chairman Ben Bernanke on Thursday, that the Fed isn't about to start raising the short-term rate it controls. But a growing number of investors expect that at its next policy-making meeting in late April, the Fed may step back from its pledge to keep short-term rates low for an "extended period."

Longer-term interest rates aren't set by the Fed but move on their own, in response to supply and demand. And some argue that the bond market has been too confident about these longer-term rates remaining low, at a time when the economy is slowly improving and the government is running huge budget deficits.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, the article talks about the fact that when we are selling our debt, which is what the Federal Government does when we do not have enough money to pay for our expenditures, when we spend more than we have, we borrow and we issue debt instruments—bonds, Treasury notes. Now we find out in today's Wall Street Journal that the demand for our debt is falling. As my friend, Senator SESSIONS from Alabama, said, Warren Buffett now is a better investment than the U.S. Treasury. What an important statement that is for us to think about, that we no longer are the best investment, that an individual in this country is a more worthy investment.

Now Treasury note demand is down. What happens when less people want to buy our debt? When they turn their nose up at our Treasury offerings, the bond prices go down and the yield goes higher. The interest rate goes up. That does a couple things. One is that we have to spend more money on interest payments. That means more of our spending in the year will go to pay for our debt. The third or fourth—depending on how you count it—biggest expenditure every year in our budget is our interest payments. There is more than \$200 billion a year in interest payments alone. That is money that could be sent back to you, the taxpayer, or

could be used to pave roads or hire teachers or send kids to college, and we are sending it to finance bad decisions we have already made. But now, with the interest rates, the yield rates going higher on the debt we are offering, guess what it is going to do. It is going to increase the cost of borrowing money, which is going to increase the cost of mortgages.

So here I am from Florida, and I sure want to extend unemployment insurance to folks who are suffering, but I also don't want to do any more damage to our real estate market. We have some of the worst foreclosure rates in the country. So what is going to happen when that family of four in Naples, FL, who has been struggling through this economy, has a problem keeping a job? Maybe mom lost a job and now she is underemployed and dad is unemployed, and they are trying to make their mortgage payments. They have an adjustable rate mortgage and their interest rates are going to go up. What happens if someone wants to buy a new house in our struggling real estate economy? They can't go buy that house because that house is now more expensive because the interest rates have gone up.

So the problems of our debt and our deficit are not just going to be visited on our kids, they are being visited now. Other countries around the world, their economies are booming. Their growth is coming back—places such as Brazil are on fire. Their stock market is up incredibly because the world is finding it a better place to invest than the United States. Our debt is making us a bad investment. So not just for our kids or our grandkids, right now this economy is going to have problems recovering because of the debt we have now.

But let's talk a second about the future. Sometime between now and Monday my wife and I are going to have our fourth child. I have the cell phone in my pocket. If it rings, I have to go. That baby is going to be born in a country where he or she will be responsible for about \$40,000 in debt. What is the future of our baby, along with our other three sons who are 6, 4 and 2, going to be like in this country with all of this crushing debt, with \$10 trillion more in debt expected by the end of this decade?

We are going to pay \$800 billion in interest payments by the end of this decade if this spending continues. That is more than we spend on the defense of the United States, more than our Defense Department budget. More and more will go to interest; less and less will go to spending. Then what will happen? Taxes are going to have to go up, and by the way, 70 million people are going to retire and they are going to go into Medicare. Those two programs right now don't have enough money in them.

So while I am high on the American people, and I am optimistic this country can do anything, I am seriously

worried about this government. I am seriously worried about the fact that we spend money we don't have, and I am seriously worried about the fact that there are too few Members of this body and the body down the hall who want to make the tough decisions to start cutting our spending now to save our future.

By the way, it wouldn't be that hard to do. It wouldn't be that hard to do for us to come together, Democrats and Republicans alike. The American people should know we have colleagues on the other side of the aisle who want to do this. We talk to them. They are concerned too. But we have to come together and address this, and we are going to have to make, as the President would say, grownup decisions about the future of this country. Some things are going to have to get cut, and we are going to have to spend less.

Let me give an example of the framework—for when we come back from the break—of a piece of legislation I will introduce to give us the mechanism for doing this. If we went back to the spending that we had in 2007, which is just 3 years ago, and we froze spending at that level for the next 10 years—until 2020—we would balance the budget in 2013, and we would cut the deficit of \$12 trillion in half by 2020.

Now, the question I ask when I am back in Florida talking to constituents is—as my friend from Georgia said—whether at a supermarket, at a town-hall meeting, or at a church—would you be able to live off the money you made in 2007? Well, the answer unanimously is, yes; it is more than I am making now. The economy didn't go into recession until December of 2007. So why can't government go back to what we spent in 2007 and cap it? Then we could do something we don't do in this Congress: We could look at the money we are spending now as opposed to trying to spend new money and find out whether we are doing it efficiently.

We could cut the wasteful programs. My colleague from Oklahoma has already been identifying hundreds of duplicative programs in government. We could go and find ways to combat waste, fraud, and abuse. For example, we know there is \$60 billion to \$100 billion a year in Medicare fraud—health care for seniors. My State, unfortunately, is the leading place for health care fraud in the country.

I have a proposal I have talked to my friend, the chairman of the Finance Committee, about—Chairman BAUCUS—and other Democrats, and I think we are going to get some bipartisan support to pass that this year, and that may save us \$20 billion by stopping waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicare. Does anyone think there is not waste and fraud and abuse throughout the spending of government? When is the last time someone went and looked under the hood of one of these agencies and said: Could we do the same work with less? Do we need to spend as much money as we spent last year?

Businesses do this every year. They are doing it right now, just as families are doing it. They are saying: Do we really need to do what we did last year? We have less money; what do we cut? Government doesn't do that.

Our friends on the other side are more interested in new programs. We should all spend a year or two focusing on the programs we have. My friend from Oklahoma, Senator COBURN, is a champion at oversight and gets under the hood of these agencies and looks at the spending. It is not just in the social services agencies, it is in all the agencies—in the Defense Department and everywhere.

We have a duty to the American people to make sure that every dollar we spend, we spend wisely. Let's spend a couple of years questioning the money we are spending now. Let's have our agency heads, our Secretaries, our Cabinet members, instead of devising new programs, go into the programs they have and see whether they are helping the American people. If they are not, let's cut them. Let's freeze hiring across the Federal Government. A lot of folks are going to retire out of the Federal Government when the baby boomers retire. It is an easy way to shrink the size of government, to let those folks retire and not replace them. Technology in the private sector gives us great opportunities to do more with less. In government, we do less with more.

So I am appreciative of my friend from Oklahoma for bringing up this point and objecting. It is not politically popular to do. None of us wants to stand in the way of unemployment compensation. I need it in Florida for my folks who are out of work. But we are impacting our way of life now, and we are going to impact our children's lives. When my baby is born this weekend, or on Monday, I am going to be extremely happy—and I know my wife is—about bringing a fourth child into the world, but it will still be in the back of my mind: Is he or she going to inherit the same America I have, with all the same opportunities I was able to enjoy? I hope so.

With that, I yield the floor to my friend from Oklahoma.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the Senators from Alabama and Florida for their comments.

Many have heard us use the word "pay-for" sometimes. When we say that, what we are actually saying is, we don't want the debt increased. So we don't want to get that confused.

I also want to make one comment in relation to what Senator REED from Rhode Island said earlier today. He said nobody on the other side of the aisle will be objecting to the supplemental coming for the military if it is not paid for. I want to state for the record that I voted against it the last two times. It is not because I don't want to support the military, but it

wasn't paid for. We didn't make the hard choices. I will vote against it again, and I will try to make that a pay-for. So it is an unfair characterization to say "nobody." I am pretty consistent on that. If we are going to spend new money, we should cut some of the money we are spending now that isn't as important.

Under the Constitution, the No. 1 responsibility for us is defending the country. One of the reasons we are in trouble is we have ignored the enumerated powers clause of the Constitution, which sets out a very limited role for the Federal Government and reserves the rest of the programs we are talking about to the States and to the people.

With that, Mr. President, I would like to recognize the senior—the Senator from Arizona, Mr. KYL. I started to say senior, but that is not so.

Mr. KYL. It is easier just to say the "other" Senator from Arizona, given who my colleague is. First of all, I want to say that my colleague, JOHN MCCAIN, has been a leader in this battle for fiscal responsibility for as long as I have been in the Senate. So as long as we are talking about the senior Senator from Arizona, let me get in that plug.

But the Senator from Oklahoma, who just yielded the time to me, has been the leader in the fight here to ensure that we pay for the things on which we spend money. I would like to get back to that critical point because I heard both the Senator from Oklahoma and the Senator from Alabama, who is on the Senate floor, and was last night, make this very point.

Let's be clear about what this debate is about and what it is not about. There are a lot of things the government must do. National defense is No. 1. We have to do it. Then we figure out what we have enough money for with regard to everything else.

There are other very important obligations or responsibilities of the Federal Government. We finally get down the list of priorities of the things that it would sure be nice to do, if we could, because of various needs of the American people. But a lot of times this gets into conflict with what families can do to help each other, what communities can do, what churches and religious institutions can do. So it is not just a responsibility of government, let alone the United States Government in Washington.

The reason I make that point is that for every dollar that is sent back to Washington, the amount of money that gets sent back to help people is usually measured in cents rather than dollars. So it is not the best way for us to take care of our fellow citizens. But one of the programs we have decided we want to have some Federal assistance in is to support our States when they provide unemployment compensation to people who have been out of work for a long time and just can't find work.

If we have relatively low unemployment, in the 5- or 6-percent range—5

percent is relatively low; 6 percent is beginning to be something where we begin to pay attention to it—we can let that go for a little while. But before long, we have citizens out there who can't find work and, therefore, are having a hard time supplying what they need for their families. Again, for a while, their families and communities and churches and so on can help them, but there comes a point when government has said: We need to help them, and it is best done at the State level. But in the last many decades the Federal Government has provided support for that unemployment compensation as well.

What we are talking about is a situation where we are now close to 10 percent unemployment, and it has been that way now for a couple of years. So we keep extending the Federal Government's support for people who can't find jobs. That is a legitimate thing for the Federal Government to do. It is not the most important thing, but I will tell you, for everybody who needs the help, it is important.

So we have tried to do that, and I have voted for every one of these temporary extensions of unemployment benefits. But there also comes a point in time, because this has gone on now for a couple of years and we keep voting time after time for these extensions, that you have to ask the question: OK, compared to what? Who is paying for this or who is going to have to pay for it?

As between someone who is looking for a job and needs some help for their family right now, and my grandchild—and I don't know the circumstances of my grandchild. My grandchild may be smart and get a good job and never have to worry about things in life or, as happens to every family, my grandchild might have a tough time—so I am asking myself—and I heard Senator COBURN on the floor last night make this point—as between what we are spending money on today and my grandchild and your grandchild, should we maybe be thinking about the burden we are placing on them to pay for this money we are spending today? It is easy for us to say we feel sorry for people who cannot find a job right now, let's help them out. It is harder when you say, who is paying the bill? If it is my grandkids, and I am not sure what their circumstances will be, I have to think that through.

What Senator COBURN has led is an effort to say, since we cannot say what kind of a burden they will have, although we know it is huge based upon what we have already spent and deferred for them to pay for, we ought to be making the tougher decision right now: If this is a worthwhile goal, if we want to extend this unemployment compensation, then let's find a way to pay for it now rather than putting more of that burden on our children and on our grandchildren. That is what is at issue, not whether we want to do it, not whether it is a good idea to do

it, not whether there are people suffering. All of that is conceded. The question is, Should we put that burden on our children and grandchildren continuously, without even bothering to ask whether we can pay for it now? Maybe there is something else we could give up now or delay in order to pay for this so we are not adding to the burden of our kids and our grandkids.

Last night, we came to a very important conclusion in the Senate, informally, and that conclusion was, since there is a 1-week period of time between the time April 5 that these benefits run out and the time April 12 that we come back into session from the Easter recess, that these, the unemployment benefits, are not paid for here, that we do not have the money to extend the benefits, that what we should do is extend those benefits for that week period of time and pay for it. That is to say, Democratic Senators and Republican Senators agreed, let's extend it for that week and let's make sure we are paying for it right now. So at least that week's benefits are not going to be an added burden on our kids and grandkids—a very important agreement and precedent that we established, for about 45 minutes.

When our colleagues on the Democratic side who had agreed with us that this should be done ran that up the flag pole with our Democratic leadership colleagues in the House of Representatives, apparently the Democratic leadership said: No, we do not want this paid for. In other words, we want that put off in the future so somebody else will pay for it, our kids and grandkids. So our Democratic friends in the Senate came back to us and said we thought we had an agreement to extend this for a week and to pay for it, but our leadership in the House would not agree and, therefore, we have to go back to what we did before, which is we are not going to have those benefits available for the week between April 5 and April 12.

That is too bad because I think what it showed is, first of all, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate can work in a bipartisan way. We established a good principle. We can both lead with our heart and help people who need help today but also act with our heads and make sure we pay for it rather than just sending the bill to our kids. That was a good precedent, that was a good agreement.

But when people out in America say: Why can't they ever work together, why can't they put politics aside, you have to ask the leadership in the House of Representatives because I think we had a pretty good agreement last night.

But what I think we also have established is, over time, more and more of our colleagues are coming to realize it is not a choice between doing something we want to do to help people who need help right now and doing nothing, it is a choice between our paying for it or asking our kids to pay for it. I think

most of us are beginning to come to the realization that from now on, as much as we have gone into debt accumulating this huge amount of debt in the past, thinking it would be OK for our kids and grandkids to pay for it, we now realize we have put entirely too much debt on their shoulders. Their standard of living is not going to be as good as ours.

Do you know—I will close with this—public opinion surveys going all the way back to just after World War II asked Americans: Do you think the next generation will be better off than our generation? Do you think we will leave it better for our kids than it was left for us?

Every generation has been able to say: Yes, our kids will have a better standard of living and better future than we did—except now. If you look at the surveys, they all say we believe we have it better than our kids will; that we have put too much of the burden of what we have spent onto our kids and grandkids. For the first time in history, Americans believe their kids, our kids, will not be as well off as we were. Why? Because we wanted to spend, we wanted to help people by spending a lot of money in Washington, but we were not willing to make the tough decisions to figure out how to pay for it.

That is a real shocking testament because we have always said we are the land of opportunity, and the American dream is every generation that succeeds will be better off than the generation before. To think about the fact that Americans do not believe that is true anymore is bothersome. But we have an ability to do something about it, and it started last night right here in the Senate. It started with Senator COBURN saying: No, we need to pay for this, and everybody else finally saying you are right and coming together in a bipartisan way, Democrats and Republicans saying we can at least start with 1 week where we do something we all want to do, help people who are unemployed, and pay for it ourselves rather than sending the bill to our kids.

That is a start and we ought to build on that. Even though that fell apart, I think it represents the beginning. If we can continue to seek the advice of our constituents, ask the American people: What do you think about this, do you think we are right about this, I think they will tell us that is exactly what they want us to do, and I think they will thank us this week for beginning to take the small steps to get to that point. Rather than casting aspersions or making political arguments or getting into partisan politics, I am going to assume we have kind of turned a corner and all of us can agree this is what we aspire to do. We may stumble along the way a little bit. But if we can now take two steps forward and only one step back rather than one step forward and two steps back, digging the debt hole deeper and deeper, then maybe in a few years we will be able to answer those public opinion questions

and say: I think we have turned it around. I think our kids will have a better future than we did. That is the best legacy of all that we could leave for them.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I comment on the Senator's point, there is not anybody in this body, Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, who does not want a great future for our kids. Everybody does. The Senator from Oregon has a set of twins, beautiful kids. He wants the best for them. What we want is the same thing other Americans want.

I showed this little sign earlier. I actually got to meet this girl because I thought it was so unique that she had the wisdom or somebody in her family had the wisdom to make the contrast. She doesn't even have a home yet, and when she had this her share of the debt was \$38,375. That is just external debt. That does not include what we borrowed and stole from Social Security and all the other trust funds. If we included that, she would have been about \$42,000. I marked through that this morning because it is now at the end of this year, September 30 of this year, every man, woman and little girl and little boy will be responsible for \$45,000. It is going to grow \$6,000 per man, woman, and child this year alone. That is just talking about the external debt. That is not talking about what we are stealing from other people.

Is there a point in time when we are on a downslope, where we get to a point in time where there is no return? We know that. Senator SESSIONS talked about it in terms of 90 percent of GDP, and how that has a depression. I made the point earlier. We saw a 1-percent increase in interest rates last year. We owe \$12.8 trillion. That is \$128 billion we are going to pay more in interest in this next year than we paid in the last year, as you float through all the bonds and recognize that 1 percent increase. What was 2.4 percent 1½ years ago on 10-year Treasury bonds is 3.88 percent right now, this morning. I checked it before I came over here. That is 1.48. As our debt balloons, that interest cost is going to go up.

You heard Senator SESSIONS say in 2019 we will spend \$850 billion on interest. We are going to spend \$850 billion on interest. Of the \$9.8 trillion we are going to borrow over the next 9 years, \$5.6 trillion of that is going to be interest. So now we are borrowing trillions of dollars to pay the interest on trillions of dollars.

It has to stop. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle recognize that. It is not that they do not want to fix it too. I agree with the Senator from Arizona. I think we will come to that realization across party lines. I was proud of the Senate yesterday because we actually worked together and came to a compromise that we could all agree to, and we got shot down by those who are thinking short term.

I am not doing this to score political points, as the Senator from Michigan alluded. I am not doing anything that I have not believed all the time I have been here, and my colleagues all across this body know that. The problem right now in our country is the debt. It is the debt.

If, in fact, we want a future—I have a 7-month old new one. I have five grandchildren. She is as cute as she can be. Her name is Katie Rose. I got to see her a couple weeks ago as my daughter came through. She hadn't seen me in a couple months and didn't like what she saw. I can't blame her for that. But the fact is, everybody has a Katie Rose. If this is your child, the new birth we are going to celebrate, Senator LEMIEUX's this weekend—everybody has one. So the contrast is, Can we do both? Can we take care of the Katie Roses of this world and take care of the unemployed or do we just say: No, it is too hard. If it is too hard, we are over. And I believe it is not over. It does not have to be. We can come together and solve both the debt problem and the needs of our country. We can do that.

I wish to give one little example. In the month of December, I had my staff search through programs that are duplicative. In 2 weeks, my staff found 640 duplicative programs—640. Let me just give one example. In our Federal Government, we have 105 programs run by nine different agencies to encourage people to study math, science, engineering and technology. One hundred five? So after that experience in December on one of the bills out here we put through, that passed, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle agreed we should have GAO do that study for us to give us all of them. That is just what we found in 2 weeks—there are thousands—because that tells us where to start eliminating duplication, start asking for metrics on what you are doing. If you have a program for math, engineering, science and technology, we ought to measure whether it is effective. We might only want to have one program instead of 105.

In the Judiciary Committee in the past 2 months, we have had two different bills that have come forward to solve problems. When the bills were offered, we didn't even know we had agencies out there and a program ready to do it.

There were some positive things with the health care bill. There are tons of negatives in my experience as a doctor who has practiced 27 years. But one of the negatives is, we are going to have 88 new government programs and we are probably going to add about 50,000 or 60,000 or 70,000 people to that. I know we are going to add 16,500 to the IRS to make sure you bought your health insurance. Why would we do that?

It is time for us to make the difficult choices. The choice does not have to be do nothing or pay for it. The choice can be we can take care of both.

I will close with this discussion. This is what we did last year—43 cents of ev-

erything the Government spent we borrowed from Katie Roses. That is who is going to pay it back. We are not going to pay it back. This year it is going to be over 45 cents, maybe 46 or 47 cents this year, because when you take the real projections for what our addition to the debt this year is—in terms of recognizing all the debt such as an accountant would do, not like the Government does—we are going to have a \$1.8 trillion deficit.

This means, externally and internally, we are going to borrow \$1.5 trillion externally, but internally we are going to borrow \$300 billion from trust funds and programs and everything else we have.

Let me give you a little example people never think about. It is called the Inland Waterway Trust Fund. It is the trust fund that has paid for all of our inland waterways. There is no money in it because we have taken it all out. We cannot do what we need to do on our navigable waters where we haul freight and barges because we have stolen all of the money. There are hundreds of those trust funds where we have emptied the coffers.

I will end with this last request. When we come back, my pledge is to work with anybody in this body who will seriously work with me on making the appropriate tradeoffs of what is important and what is not in terms of priorities.

You know that our nature as elected officials is not to offend anybody. If we continue with that process—I am talking about those who support programs we cannot afford—we are all going to be offended because every Katie Rose in the world, in our country, will have her future squelched.

And the last set of numbers you should pay attention to: If you are under 25 years of age today—that means from 25 to 1—20 years from now, you plus everybody who is born in that 20 years will be responsible for debt and unfunded liabilities of \$1,113,000. Think about that. In the next 20 years, those under 25 and below and everybody born will be responsible for \$1,113,000. Think about what that costs. If you apply a 6-percent interest rate to that, let's round it at \$60,000—it is more than that; \$66,000—something—you are going to have to pay \$66,000 in carry costs either through interest on the national debt or through direct taxes before you ever pay the first income tax to run anything for the Federal Government. What does that mean in terms of opportunity for those Katie Roses and this little girl? It means they will have trouble buying a home. They will have trouble educating their kids to give them opportunity.

So I believe we are at a point where we have to start making the hard decisions. My pledge to my colleagues is that I will work with you in a way that is positive to make sure we do not put these people at risk. But I also will work with you to make sure you understand that I am going stand up every

time, including the supplemental that is coming forward, and say that we must pay for it rather than charge it to our children.

With that, I yield our time to the Senator from Oregon. I would note that we have until 12:30 to finish this discussion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, when I have come to the floor over the last few months, I have always tried to focus on ways to bring parties together, both sides to work for common solutions—whether it's health care, the new tax reform bill Senator GREGG and I have introduced, or the Build America Bonds program put together by Senator THUNE and I, which has clearly been a huge success in terms of revolutionizing the system for funding transportation and infrastructure. Senator CORNYN and I are working on a significant crime bill. So I am always going to come to this floor and try to be bipartisan and bring both sides together.

On this question of helping folks who are so desperately hurting today—including so many in my State, where we have a very high unemployment rate—I want to suggest a bipartisan path forward that I hope we can look at in the days ahead. I see my friend from Georgia here, who also wants to work on these major economic issues in a bipartisan way.

When you listened to colleagues last night and this morning, it seems to me there is agreement on two fundamental principles. One is that it is absolutely essential to help folks who are hurting now. We have millions of Americans walking on an economic tightrope; balancing their food bill against their fuel bill; trying to pay for essentials; going to bed every night, whether in Colorado, Oregon, or Georgia, figuring out if they are going to be able to pay the bills when they wake up in the morning. So there is agreement on both sides that you have to help folks who are hurting now. There is also agreement that we have to deal with this deficit, and the spending issue which is contributing to the deficit for the long term. So, in effect, we start the possibility of a bipartisan strategy around agreement in two key areas: We have to help folks now who are hurting, and we have to deal with those major deficits, the revenue and spending problems, in the long term.

What there is disagreement on, it seems to me, is the timing of these particular debates. I and others feel very strongly that it is just not right to compound the hurt Americans are suffering, even for a few weeks, even for a few days. That is why we very much want, before we go home, to have this worked out and to get this unemployment benefits extension to them.

We also recognize that getting at this long-term budget issue quickly is a matter of national urgency. I sit on the Budget Committee. We are going to

have a chance to do that in April, within 30 days.

So what you see is, in effect, all of the various ideas with respect to extending unemployment so that folks who are hurting so badly do not go without for a short period of time—a week, 2 weeks, 30 days—a variety of different approaches. All of those time periods are shorter than the time period for when we will have an opportunity to make tough decisions for the long term that we have heard Democrats and Republicans talking about this morning.

So I hope that we can get back to working in a bipartisan way around those two areas of agreement that will help folks who are hurting now, help them quickly, not have them suffer any more, even for a few additional days, and that we recognize that in April, on the Budget Committee on which I serve, we will have the opportunity to tackle the larger budget issues. We have very strong bipartisan leadership between Senator CONRAD and Senator GREGG. A lot of us thought they were right on their debt commission. I supported that, supported it for a long time. So we have an opportunity to make those long-term budget decisions Democrats and Republicans rightly have said are so important, beginning next month. So let's do both. Let's help people who are hurting now and recognize how serious the challenge is with respect to the long term as well.

The only other point I would make with respect to the unemployment extension is a point made by a number of our country's leading economists who are advising both Republicans and Democrats, again, in a bipartisan fashion. Mark Zandi, for example, one of our leading economists who is relied on by individuals of both political parties, has pointed out that for every dollar of unemployment, our country gets \$1.64 in return. The folks who are unemployed spend their benefits as quickly as they can get them. They spend them only on essentials. They spend them on the essentials of life.

It is pretty obvious that consumer spending is a very significant part of economic recovery. The economic recovery is obviously fragile. We have so many folks out of work, and those folks and the folks who are worried about losing their jobs put off spending on anything but the most basic needs. So obviously that slowdown in consumer spending also takes a toll on our economy. If we are going to make up for the decline in consumer spending, one obvious way, it seems to me, is to get this extra help to folks who are hurting so badly today in our country.

So it strikes me that the decision to not get help to people immediately is simply illogical. It is bad from the standpoint of economic recovery. It is obviously going to compound the hurt Americans who are out of work are experiencing now, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle have said they don't want that to happen.

So I am very hopeful that even before the end of the day, for the folks who are out of work, who are exhausting their unemployment and COBRA benefits—that there will be discussions here in the Senate to try to make sure folks are not denied the bare minimums that are needed to just get by and not denied even for just a few days. The fact is, these are folks who are making \$250, \$300 a week. None of them are living a life of leisure. No one can say these folks are somehow, as a result of their benefits, disinclined to find work. They are not part of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." They are the millions who today walk that economic tight-rope, always feeling that another big bill is going to push them into the abyss where they cannot afford to pay the rent, cannot afford to pay the utility bill, cannot afford food. It is not right to let these folks suffer.

I would submit that on a matter such as this, which is, in my view, a question of right and wrong, that is what extending unemployment benefits for a short period of time to prevent human suffering is all about, that we stay at this effort so folks who are hurting so badly in our country do not lose out, if even for only a few days. I will be at my post to continue to work and talk with colleagues of both political parties toward that end. We have to stay at it to ensure there is no break in the essential benefits the most vulnerable of our country so desperately needs.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2010

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4957, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Reserving the right to object, let me say that the Senator from Oregon has made some very good points, and he is exactly right. They are points we agree with on this side of the aisle.

I do not object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4957) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 4957) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONTINUING EXTENSION ACT, 2010

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I have listened to the debate in the last few hours, yesterday, and today. I have heard these debates for years about unemployment compensation, unemployment insurance. In the end, some of my colleagues vote for extension of unemployment benefits for hard-working Americans, Americans who have had jobs and are trying to find jobs but have lost their jobs.

When I saw what happened a month ago when Senator BUNNING, time and time again, single-handedly for a period of time—because of the peculiar rules of this institution, one Senator representing a State that has less than 1 percent of the population, one Senator representing a State which makes up less than 1 percent of the country—granted the minority leader is in that State too—one Senator can block the extension of unemployment compensation to millions of Americans, to people in Youngstown, Lima, Mansfield, or Chillicothe and Toledo. Now we have a handful of his colleagues doing the same thing.

Sometimes I think they don't understand unemployment compensation. They believe unemployment is welfare. It is called unemployment insurance. That doesn't mean people are looking for a handout. It means workers, as virtually everyone does who is working, pay into an insurance fund when they are working. The whole point is, if they lose their job they collect unemployment insurance.

It is like you buy car insurance, hoping you don't have to use it. But if you get in a car accident, you use the insurance to pay for it. Many people don't ever have to collect unemployment insurance. They are the lucky ones. It is the same with health insurance. You buy health insurance and you hope to not use it, but if you get sick, then you use your health insurance. Whether you are a worker in Boulder or Pueblo or Trinidad or Columbus or Dayton, you need that unemployment insurance as a backup.

So many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, so many conservatives think it is a welfare program: I got laid off. I can draw unemployment and stay on it, and I don't have to work. I can enjoy my time off.

It is not vacation. The New York Times had some articles the other day