

I have this question for Members of the Senate who will be asked to vote on this after the break: What if the assessment comes back and says that soldiers and marines in significant numbers are not willing to continue in a voluntary service under these conditions? What if that is the result of the assessment? Then it will be too late for the Members of the House and Senate to make a change in this policy.

The time to take a pause and the time to see what our members actually think is now. We can force this on the services, but in a voluntary armed force, we cannot force members to enlist. We cannot force marines, who are putting their lives on the line for what they believe is the American way of life and for our freedom and for the security of all Americans, to reenlist when their time is up. We need to know if they are going to be willing to stay in the service and to make that commitment and to put themselves in harm's way under this very drastic, dramatic change. We should not substitute our judgment for what the members of the service and their families think. And I regret that we have gone this far and regret the action of the Armed Services Committee.

There is one other issue that was regrettably voted on in the affirmative by the committee yesterday, and that is with regard to abortion policy. Since 1996, we have had a policy that abortions—elective abortions—will not be performed on our military installations. This is a policy that was passed by the House and Senate and signed into law by a Democratic President, President Clinton. For the past 14 years, it has been our policy that elective abortions will not be performed in our military installations.

Yesterday, the committee decided to reverse this longstanding policy and to say that, indeed, abortions for whatever reason will be performed in these facilities that are paid for at taxpayer expense and are there for the care of our servicemembers, to keep them healthy and to repair their injuries. We are going to use those facilities for elective abortions.

I guarantee you this will be challenged on the floor of the House and Senate with separate amendments, and Members will be given a chance to vote on this separate issue. But if this amendment stands, the medical facilities of our military installations—Fort Bragg, Columbus Air Force Base, Keesler Air Force Base in my home State of Mississippi—will be able to be used for abortions performed late term, abortions performed for purposes of sex selection, abortions performed for any reason, abortions at will. That will be the requirement for our military installations and the medical facilities on those installations—again, another piece of social engineering, another vast and serious and consequential departure from longstanding Department of Defense policy.

I regret these two positions. I call on my colleagues, Mr. President, during

this Memorial Day break, when we are talking with those who have served, who have put themselves in harm's way, and when we are talking with the families of those who have served and who have given the ultimate sacrifice, that we seriously consider whether the committee has made the right decision and that we come back to Washington, DC, with a determination to reverse these two very harmful and, in my view, mistaken actions by the Armed Services Committee.

With that, I wish my friend, the Acting President pro tempore of the Senate, a happy and prosperous Memorial Day, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE RHODE ISLAND FLOOD

Mr. REED. Mr. President, in March my State was hit with back-to-back historic floods that caused hundreds of millions of dollars in damage in Rhode Island. I thank the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator INOUE, and the ranking member, Senator COCHRAN, and my colleagues on the committee especially, who have recognized the needs of Rhode Island in the appropriations bill we recently completed. We are struggling to overcome the effects of the worst flooding in centuries in the midst of the worst economic environment we have seen since the 1930s.

Indeed, Rhode Island was among the first States to sink into this latest recession. In the last 2 years, Rhode Island has consistently ranked among the top three States in unemployment, with as many as 12.7 percent of our workforce without jobs. By the latest estimates, 12.5 percent of the State is out of work, and this is not including all of the jobs that have been lost in the flooding.

Our major commercial mall in Warwick, RI, has been closed since March. Hundreds, perhaps even 1,000 or more jobs, have been lost. They are rapidly trying to reopen this facility under the incredible leadership of the owner, Aram Garabedian, but to date they have opened one store. Soon they hope to open another. For those hundreds of people, they have lost their jobs and are waiting to go back to work.

The reach of the flood was widespread, covering every county of the State. In the space of 2 weeks, separate rainstorms caused four rivers—the Blackstone, Pawtuxet, the Pawcatuck, and the Pocasset—to go above flood stage. Interstate 95, the major north-south route in the Northeast of this country, was closed for 2 days. It has

never been closed for that length of time. The last time I can recall it being closed was in 1978 during a huge blizzard which shut down traffic for about a day or so.

President Obama and FEMA issued major disaster declarations for the entire State, and I thank the President. He moved very quickly and very aggressively. I also thank FEMA. They dispatched immediately their deputy for disaster operations. They had on the ground within, it seemed, hours, key personnel. I particularly want to recognize Gracia Szczech, an incredible woman who, in fact, frankly, left Rhode Island to be sent down to the next great flood in Tennessee. Senator ALEXANDER and Senator CORKER have spoken about their problems. I thank both the President and FEMA for the incredible response.

But what you find in a flood like this—all of my colleagues have been subject to them and, frankly, this is a phenomenon that is usually found in other parts of the country—but what you find in floods is that the water recedes, the Sun comes out, but the damage and devastation remains. We have about 2,000 households that are still not able to live in their homes. This is something that has caused a tremendous shock to our economy and to our workforce and to the people of Rhode Island.

After 2 months, homeowners and businesses in much of the State are still struggling with these effects. The flooding caused job losses in a number of sectors; 1,800 jobs were lost in the food services and accommodation sector alone. I mentioned the Warwick Mall. Approximately 1,100 people have lost their jobs because of the shutdown of that commercial center. Health, education, manufacturing, construction, transportation, art and recreation—all of these sectors have experienced significant job losses.

As my colleagues know, Rhode Island has been fortunate for many decades to have avoided this kind of natural disaster, particularly from flooding. The last major natural disaster of the State was Hurricane Bob in 1991. It roared up and hit our State, like other parts of the Northeast, and we suffered significant damage. Since that time we have been rather fortunate, but our fortune ran out with these floods this spring.

There has been no question about the support of people of Rhode Island or my colleagues in our State's congressional delegation when this type of disaster hits elsewhere. Midwest flooding, Katrina in Louisiana and along the gulf coast—we are there because we know, No. 1, Americans, our neighbors, are suffering, and that is when we all have to pull together and help them. We also know, too, and expect that when it happens in our home States that same spirit of pulling together, of helping out, of getting people back in their homes and opening up businesses would be something we would experience and we would see too.

I am grateful, again, in the midst of this challenging fiscal environment, the Appropriations Committee on a bipartisan basis has included assistance for Rhode Island and for Tennessee. They have responded, as they have so many times before, to the needs of people who have lost homes, lost jobs.

One thing they do not want them to lose is hope. So they stepped forward to provide the resources necessary to begin the difficult task of rebuilding. I thank again Chairman INOUE and Vice Chairman COCHRAN, gentlemen of extraordinary kindness but extraordinary faithfulness to the core values of this country.

One of the basic values is, when difficult times affect people in this country, we are not going to look away, we are going to try to help them. They have done it again for Rhode Island and Tennessee. We still have a long way to go for recovery. I look forward to continuing to work with the chairman and other members of the committee as we go forward. But their efforts will provide meaningful and material support to the people of Rhode Island. I thank them very much.

EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

This is a moment also, as we reflect upon the damage caused by the flood, to once again underscore the damage that has been caused for now several years by an economy that has lost millions of jobs.

Few States, have felt the impact of this job loss more severely than Rhode Island. If we fail to act on unemployment compensation before June 2—and I am so disappointed that it seems quite obvious that we will not act—we are going to once again put thousands of Rhode Islanders and millions of Americans who are looking for work and cannot find it, in jeopardy of not being able to receive unemployment compensation.

All of the economic arguments about unemployment compensation are obvious but bear repeating. This is one of those programs that for every dollar we invest we get significantly more in terms of economic activity in the country. So it is part of our recovery package as well as part of keeping faith with people who have worked hard, paid their dues, literally, and now are looking for the benefits of this program.

In March, the Senate passed, on a bipartisan basis, with six of my Republican colleagues, an extension of unemployment benefits as part of an early extenders package to the end of the year, 62 to 36. The unemployment extension, as it was then and has been in the past, was unpaid for. It was deemed emergency spending. I find it ironic and interesting that we can deem billions of dollars as an emergency to support our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq and, frankly, part of that support is not simply to buy ammunition and fuel products and HUMVEES for American troops, it is to give our commanders CERP money so they can go into the

communities of Iraq and Afghanistan and put people to work because of their unemployment problems.

It is very difficult to go back to Rhode Island and tell them it is an emergency to put people in Kabul to work, put people in Kandahar to work, put people in Basra and Baghdad to work, but it is not an emergency to put people to work in Boise, not an emergency to put people to work in Keokuk, IA. And, certainly, in places such as Providence, Cranston, Central Falls, Woonsocket, all through my State.

It is truly unfortunate that we are now, at this juncture, in a position where these benefits for which a long-term extension has been passed separately in both the Senate and the House will lapse. That is regrettable, to say the least; in fact, it is deplorable.

I am optimistic that when we come back after this Memorial Day recess, we will craft an extension. I am afraid it is going to be a short-term extension. I am also afraid, once again, millions of Americans are going to be living month to month with an ocean of, I have benefits, but how long can I keep them? That uncertainty is unacceptable. We can do better. We have done it individually by extending benefits at least to the end of this year. We have to do that. If we do not extend them at least for a short period, millions of unemployed workers will lose benefits throughout the country, including 2,000 in Rhode Island.

Since last year's passage of the Recovery Act, I would point out, there have been eight filibusters of legislation to extend unemployment benefits. I think the people in this country who need help and not just pointless debate are those who are out of work, looking for it, and needing the support of unemployment compensation.

We have allowed it to lapse twice this year. Weeks have gone by, as they will go by, unfortunately, in the next few weeks, where there is uncertainty and doubt about payments being maintained. I think it is outrageous that having my colleagues on the other side repeatedly approve budgets sent by President Bush that were unpaid for, not even an attempt to pay for them, that provided tax cuts to the wealthiest citizens, that conducted two major military conflicts without paying for them, suddenly feel they have got to pay for unemployment benefits for workers in America. We have to be focused on this deficit. That is correct. Let me remind my colleagues, we did focus on the deficit. In the 1990s when I was a Member of the House, we focused on it to the extent that we reversed the deficit and created a surplus. Critical votes under President Clinton without any Republican support. When push comes to shove, when it is not about the rhetoric but it is about standing up and doing tough things to eliminate a deficit, many of my colleagues on the other side are missing in action.

We can and we must reverse this deficit. It will take difficult votes, not rhetoric alone. But at this juncture to once again engage in rhetorical debate rather than actively helping our countrymen and our constituents is missing the point. I think we have to go forward. I think we must go forward to provide these short-term benefits, and to do it in a way that is consistent with our history and our values.

When times are tough, yes, we have always talked about the deficit and everything else, but we have reached out and helped our citizens who need this kind of help. Congress has never ended emergency unemployment benefits until unemployment has declined to at least 7.4 percent in this Nation.

In Rhode Island it is 12.5 percent. We have got a long way to go before we get to the point where we can talk about a self-correcting economy. If you look at our history through every administration, Republicans and Democrats, when we had unemployment at this level affecting so many Americans, affecting not just their wallets but their future and their hopes for a future, we have extended, almost automatically, emergency unemployment benefits.

The rate today is 9.9 percent nationally, and again, 12.5 percent in Rhode Island. We have a long way to go before we can start talking about this unemployment crisis as something of the past. We need to extend unemployment benefits at least through the end of this year. We have got to do it because we need to help people and give them the certainty of that help.

We have to move. We have to act. It is going to be something we will do. I think we should do it now. I think we should put aside the posturing and extend benefits and then get on to the difficult work, not just the easy talk, but the difficult work of deficit reduction.

I have done that work. I have listened to complaints in campaigns repeatedly about tough votes we took in the 1990s. But because we took those tough votes, by 2000 we had an economy that was producing jobs, not losing them; we had a budget that was in surplus, not in deficit; we had the wherewithal to make investments in education, in energy, and in health care that would make us even more productive and more successful and more equitable in terms of the benefits to this country.

But many of the same people who now are talking about deficits sort of cavalierly said, let's cut taxes for the rich. Let's engage in a military operation that is not paid for. So from 2000 to 2008, the economy collapsed, the deficit soared, opportunities narrowed, unemployment grew. I do not think that is a coincidence. Let's get back to business. Let's first give people who need unemployment benefits those benefits. And let's take those tough steps—and they will not be easy—to reduce the deficit. Do not use the deficit as an excuse to break faith with the

American public. One article of faith is when we have unemployment levels of 10 percent nationally, we have never failed to extend, in a routine fashion, emergency unemployment compensation.

We have got a lot of work to do when we get back. I am sorely disappointed we could not conclude this work before we left.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ILLEGALITY AT THE BORDER

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we had a number of votes this week, including one last night in the Armed Services Committee concerning whether to utilize the National Guard to confront the raging illegality that is occurring particularly in the Tucson sector of Arizona. It is a national crisis. The American people fully understand that.

President Obama announced, with some fanfare, that he would send 1,200 National Guard troops to the border. To some, that may have sounded like a good thing. It is certainly not a bad thing. But the truth is, President Bush, under Operation Jumpstart, had 6,000 National Guard at the border at one point, and they made a positive difference. The immigration and Border Patrol people were very complimentary of the National Guard. They repeatedly stated how much it helped them do their job. Since that period, a lot of developments have occurred on the border that have put us in a much better position to be effective in ending this massive illegality than had been the case previously. For example, we have completed close to 350 miles of pedestrian fencing and almost 300 miles of vehicle fencing along the Southern border. Though this only half of the 700 miles of reinforced pedestrian fencing mandated by the Secure Fence Act of 2006, it is a good start. President Bush reluctantly signed that bill into law, and started the process of building fencing and vehicle barriers. Much of it is has been completed now, but we still need to finish what Congress mandated. The fence has multiplied the capabilities of law enforcement officers in many sectors along the border. In addition, the Operation Streamline concept that had begun under the Bush administration in certain sectors of the border is working superbly and is a valuable tool. Other steps have been taken, including increasing the number of Border Patrol agents we authorized several years ago. They are just now coming on line and have been trained.

So we have a lot more agents at the border.

The number of people being arrested at the border remains unacceptable, but it is better than it has been. The numbers are down and, in some sectors, down dramatically. For example, in the Yuma sector of Arizona, about 6,900 people were arrested at the border trying to enter the country illegally in 2009. That may sound like a lot—and it is—but it is much less than the over 118,000 apprehended in 2006. In fact, that is a 94 percent decrease in just three years. But in the Tucson sector, where we have old fencing and limited Operation Streamline in effect, over 240,000 were arrested last year—a stunning number. Over a million pounds of marijuana were seized as part of that enforcement effort in the Tucson sector. That is what has caused such a pushback by the people of Arizona.

The President and Washington say: It is our job to end illegality at the border. You can't do anything. You have no jurisdiction. We don't want you to do anything.

That is not correct legally. I have done research on that point. A local law enforcement officer can stop and detain a person whom he identifies as being in the country illegally and turn them over to the Federal Government for the crime of entering the country illegally and for the crime of any other Federal offense they ascertain. This is classical law. It is well recognized. There is no dispute about it.

The people of Arizona rightly have gotten a bellyful. Their hospitals are being overrun. Crime is up. Phoenix is now the second leading kidnapping center in the world, second only to Mexico City in kidnappings, apparently.

It is not acceptable. It is a Federal responsibility. It is the President's responsibility. The President is the chief law enforcement officer. The ICE agents, the Border Patrol agents, Homeland Security, and the Defense Department are under the executive branch, of which the President is the head. I have been through this. We have talked about this. I made a speech before the last election and went into detail about what it would take to end the illegality at the border. It is not hard. It can be done. But we have to have the President committed.

Congress can pass laws. We can send money and force it on the departments. But if they are not willing to utilize it and apply it in an effective way, then we have problems.

Someone came up with the idea of having a virtual fence. They were going to apply that concept. We have now spent over \$1.1 billion to create this virtual fence and it didn't work. In fact, Secretary Napolitano has suspended work on the project. But if we build a fence with a good response time from Border Patrol agents, it makes a big difference. Go to Yuma or El Paso to see what that means. The President needs to lead.

What would we expect to happen? I have always believed the normal, nat-

ural thing is that the President would come to Congress and say: The borders are wide open. We have had 240,000 people arrested in the Tucson sector. This is unacceptable. I need A, B, C, and D, Congress. Give it to me. We will end this.

He should be telling us what he needs—unless, of course, we have no real desire to end the illegality, which is the case. Why? Because of politics, apparently, and some promise that must have been made in the last campaign that, we are not going to do anything significant at the border until those people in Congress give us amnesty. That is what comprehensive immigration reform is, in the minds of the pro-immigration crowd. They say: We won't fix the border until you agree to give us amnesty.

The American people have seen that before. It doesn't work. We did it in 1986. If we don't end the illegality and we grant amnesty, it sends a message to the world. And what message is that? If someone can get into the United States illegally, if they can burrow in a little bit and hold on, pretty soon they will get amnesty, too. They come in. They get work. Nobody complains if they are working. They hang on and hang on, and they get amnesty.

This eviscerates the American legal system. It makes a mockery of the law. It sends a message to the world: Come on down. Come on into our country in violation of our laws. We will welcome you and eventually make you a citizen. And those of you who want to come lawfully, you have to fill out paperwork, and you have to wait. And if you have a relative to the right degree, you can get in. But if you graduated at the top of your high school class in Honduras and you learned English and you have a year of college, you don't have a relative or whatever, you have to wait in line, unless, of course, you come in and enter illegally.

This is a dysfunctional legal system. We continue to see things develop that indicate to me that the views of the American people, which are sound and reasonable—they just want a lawful system of immigration; they are not against immigration; they are not against immigrants, but they are tired of this massive illegality—are not being listened to by the politicians. The politicians are saying things that are incorrect.

President Obama said he cares about workplace enforcement. What happened right after he took office? Apparently a raid—planned maybe even before he took office—in the State of Washington at a company that had a large number of illegal workers occurred. What happened? The pro-illegal immigration crowd, La Raza, the activists, they were all up in arms. Basically, they said: You promised us you wouldn't do this, Mr. President.

Wait a minute. I thought we had all the candidates saying we need to do better enforcement in the workplace. The jobs magnet does attract people