

out of work for a long time are struggling to make ends meet while they are looking for a job. This bill extends the emergency unemployment assistance they need, critical help that, for many, has expired or dried up.

Every day we don't act, those families in Nevada and across the Nation continue to suffer unnecessary pain. This will be the eighth week since March the Senate has debated the tax-cutting, job-creating bill currently on the Senate floor. That is 2 full months, 2 full months we have been waiting and they have been waiting—the people in our States—for us to respond to an emergency. That is unacceptable.

The richest corporations continue to get richer while the unemployed remain out of work. Every minute we waste, it gets worse. It is our job to debate and not to delay. It is our job to legislate; it is our job to do something about the plight of the people in America. We need to legislate relief.

As we serve our citizens, it would serve the Senate well to remember the consequences of decisions that are driven by politics, purely, and the consequences of our actions and our inaction alike.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. If I can just interrupt my friend for a minute, does the Senator have some consent agreements he wants to do or would he rather I come back?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I have one consent in here, yes.

Mr. REID. I will just wait. I am happy to be here.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3421

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it should be perfectly clear by now that Democrats here in Washington have no intention of being encumbered by the will of the American people. Whether it is health care, financial reform, creating private sector jobs, spending, debt, or even the oilspill, Americans say they want one thing and Democrats do another.

And we are seeing the same thing in the ongoing debate over the deficit extenders bill that is on the floor. Americans are anxious in a way they have never been about our monstrous national debt. Yet for nearly 3 weeks now, Democrats in Congress have been arguing among themselves not about how much they should cut the debt down but about how much they should increase it.

So we can add this to the list of crises Americans are begging Congress to address but which Democrats are either ignoring or exploiting to advance their agenda. The White House likes to talk about inflection points. Well, for most Americans, a \$13 trillion debt

should have marked an inflection point for Democrats on the issue of debt. But the debate over this extenders bill has shown Democrats to be oblivious to the gravity of this crisis.

At a moment when certain European countries appear to be coming apart because of their own debt, Democrats in Washington still can't break the habit. Economists are warning us every day to get the debt under control. Just today, in fact, it was reported that Germany's Economy Minister is pleading with the Obama administration to cut spending and to restore fiscal balance or risk instability.

Yet nearly 3 weeks into the debate over the extenders bill, Democrats still can't agree to pass it without borrowing more money to pay for it. Republicans offered a fully offset 30-day extension of this bill that didn't just cover its cost but actually reduced the deficit in the process. Democrats rejected it. We offered an amendment that would have provided a long term extension of the expired provisions and lowered the deficit by \$55 billion over 10 years. Democrats rejected that too.

This should be an easy one, but Democrats are making it difficult because they just can't seem to bring themselves to pay for legislation.

But the American people aren't conflicted on this issue. And they want us to show we are serious, that we are willing to make the same kinds of tough choices they themselves have been forced to make in this recession. So I say to my friend from Nevada I am going to ask, now, a unanimous consent.

I again ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 411, S. 3421; further, that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table. Before the chair rules, for clarity, this is a paid-for 30-day extension of the extenders bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I realize very much the financial situation our country finds itself in today. Everyone on this side of the aisle recognizes that. We also recognize the fact that the problems dealing with the economy were not created by the Democrats or even President Obama. The problems were created by virtue of 8 years of wild spending by a prior administration, a war costing \$1 trillion that was unpaid for, and tax cuts amounting to more than \$1 trillion, unpaid for, that caused this huge recession.

President Obama has been doing his best, working with us to get our way out of that financial situation in which we find ourselves. I am very amazed at the logic of my friends on the other side of the aisle suddenly seeing fiscal austerity as the way to go when the wild spending went on for 8 years without a word having been spoken.

We are doing everything we can to make sure the country continues on an upward scale. It has now. We have a long ways to go. But as economists say, the hemorrhaging has stopped, and we are trying to work our way into a vibrant economy. We are a long ways from that, and I recognize that.

In today's newspaper a number of columnists are talking about being very careful what we do. We are very aware of the pain people are feeling out there; for example, those people who are unemployed, long-term unemployed. As I have said on this floor before, Mark Zandi—JOHN MCCAIN's financial adviser when he ran for President—has said the most important thing we can do is give those people unemployment benefits because it goes right back into the economy and helps the economy.

A Nobel Prize-winning economist writes a column several times a week in the New York Times. Today he talks about the fact that we have to be very careful how we rein in spending. We know we have to do it, but we have to be very careful doing it.

In 1937, after we had pulled our way out of the economic crisis we found ourselves in, spending was reined in too quickly and it caused the country to go back into, not a depression but a recession. World War II saved our country financially in that regard.

I know my friend's heart is in the right place, but his logic is in the wrong place, and I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, our good friends on the other side still do not seem to get it. They are twisting and turning, not in an effort to cut the debt but to borrow as much as they can with the minimum votes they need to pass this bill. And the best part of all is their justification. You guessed it. They want to blame President Bush for their own unwillingness to pay for this bill. They say that because the debt grew during his administration they are immune to any criticism for dramatically increasing it themselves.

Well, I have some news for our friends on the other side: Nobody is buying that anymore, because there is not any comparison here. When President Obama took office, the deficits he inherited were projected to \$4.3 trillion over the next 10 years. One year later, one year after President Bush left office, the Congressional Budget Office had to put out a revised estimate: After 1 year of Democrats controlling Washington, estimated deficits just over the next decade had nearly doubled to \$8.1 trillion, in the middle of a recession; in other words, at a time when projected revenues coming in are actually decreasing.

Or consider this: The largest annual deficit ever accumulated by the previous administration was \$455 billion.

The largest annual deficit ever accumulated by the previous administration was \$455 billion. So what did President Obama do when he took office? He wrote a budget that guarantees average annual deficits of more than double that every year for the next 10 years. More than doubles the largest deficit we had during the Bush years and anticipates that for every year for the next decade.

So the kind of spending and debt Democrats are engaged in and which they are committed to continue year after year is like nothing this country has ever seen. We have never seen anything like this. It threatens not only the livelihoods of our children, it threatens our national security and the very safety net Democrats claim they want to protect.

The fact is, the longer we wait to address this debt in a serious manner, the more that safety net actually frays and the harder this crisis will be to address. At some point a choice has to be made, and that point is now.

I noticed that the President's Chief of Staff had some ideas over the weekend about how to frame up the November elections. I cannot think of a better example of how detached the Democrats seem to be at this moment from the concerns of the American people. Americans want to know what is being done to fix a broken pipe at the bottom of the Gulf, not what is being done to fix the election. The White House might view the upcoming election as its biggest crisis at the moment, but the American people are focused on fixing this pipe and cleaning up this mess. Two months of delays and bureaucratic redtape have done nothing to solve the crisis, but they have done a lot to discredit the kind of big-government solutions that Democrats continue to promote. Every day the oil continues to flow is a day Americans' faith in government ends.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend says he has never seen anything like this. Well, I have never seen anything like this reasoning. Everyone knows that President Obama did not cause the oil gushing into the ocean, and he has done his utmost to try to alleviate the pain and suffering of the people in the gulf. He had the good fortune of getting the company responsible for this oil gushing out of the ocean to come up with a \$20 billion trust fund to pay the people who suffered. There were some Republicans last week who said they thought it was wrong for the President to do that. But that was a very small minority who believed that. I have never seen anything like this. So President Obama is not responsible for the oil gushing out of the Earth into the ocean, and President Obama is not responsible for the severe recession that hit this country in the last few months of the Bush administration.

I cannot imagine anyone thinking we should not have taken the measures we

did to help bolster the economy. The economic recovery package created millions of jobs. There is still money in the pipeline to create more jobs. And as it says in this one op-ed piece in the New York Times today:

And some of the most vocal deficit scolds in Congress are working hard to reduce taxes for the handful of lucky Americans who are heirs to multimillion-dollar estates. This would do nothing for the economy now, but it will reduce revenue by billions of dollars a year, permanently.

It will be interesting to see in the next few weeks how these same budget hawks feel about the estate taxes that we have to address. I would hope we can all be calm and deliberate here. We have a few weeks left. We have 2 weeks in this week period, 4 or 5 the next work period to get some things done here.

We have appropriations bills we have to do. We have these tax extenders we have been working on, as I indicated, for 8 weeks. We have the unemployment benefits we need to extend. People are now desperate for that money. We have also something to help States called FMAP, which helps for Medicaid, which has been such a drain on the States because of the tremendous problems we have had with people being out of work and needing to go on Medicaid because there is no place else for them to go for health care.

I would hope we can move forward on the legislation that we tried try to finish last week. I am grateful we were able to finally get the short-term fix on the patients who are Medicare recipients. Now if we can get something done in the House there, doctors will be able to be reimbursed not at the fat and sassy rate, but at least it will be better than the 21-percent cut that was going to go into effect today or tomorrow.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be a period of morning business until 5:15 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with no motions in order.

The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly today about some broken promises related to the health care bill, specifically, President Obama's promise that if Americans liked their current coverage, they would be able to keep it.

Remember that promise. Last June, the President promised on national television that:

Government is not going to make you change plans under health reform.

In his September address to Congress, he reassured Americans:

If you have health insurance through your job, nothing in our plan requires you to change what you have.

Well, those two statements are true as far as they go. The law does not require. The problem is, everything written into the law will, nevertheless, result in that happening.

What we are seeing is new developments every week that prove that what we had said would happen will, in fact, happen. Many Americans are not going to be able to keep the coverage they have, even though they like it. That includes many who have employer-based coverage in addition to many seniors who rely on private Medicare plans known as Medicare Advantage.

So how does this happen? First, with regard to the 170 million Americans who have employer-based coverage, regulations are being written right now by the administration, specifically by the Labor and Health and Human Services Departments and the IRS that will have a direct impact on people not being able to keep their plans. These regulations deal with existing plans called "grandfathered plans." Grandfathered status was supposed to allow employers to continue offering their current plans even if they did not meet all of the government's new cost-increasing mandates and requirements, such as minimum standards for what a plan must offer. That was the whole point of grandfathering.

It was also intended to protect Americans enrolled in their plans from "rate shock" or significant premium increases as a result of the new government mandates. But according to the administration's own report, new regulations could mean that two-thirds of all workers at small businesses would have to relinquish their grandfathered status, exposing them to these new mandates and requirements.

The worst-case scenario, according to the report, is that a whopping 80 percent of small firms' plans would lose their grandfathered status. By 2013, the report concludes, more than half of all workers' plans, 51 percent, will be subject to new Federal requirements. So much for the idea that if you like your plan you get to keep it.

These requirements drive up the cost of insurance, impede an employer's ability to adjust to rising health care costs, and ultimately provide an incentive to employers to drop their coverage altogether and instead pay a fine or, to put it another way, it creates a disincentive to keeping your coverage and an incentive to dropping their coverage and forcing them to buy the coverage through the so-called exchange.

The individual mandate provision in the bill would then require these workers whose coverage has been dropped to purchase the government-approved insurance from the new government-dictated exchange, replete with the highest costs, more mandates, and so on.

Of the new regulations, James Gelfand, who is health policy director