

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business on the Democratic time for about 10 minutes.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I come to the floor to plead with our Republican colleagues to pass the extension of unemployment benefits. I still am amazed, as are so many Ohioans and so many Coloradans and people from all over the country, that all of a sudden my colleagues care so much about the budget deficit, when if we go back 10 years, we had a budget surplus. Then three things happened. One was the war in Iraq. The Presiding Officer opposed it, as did I. But more than that, we went to war and didn't pay for it. We put the cost of the war on our children and grandchildren. There was not an outcry from anybody on the other side of the aisle saying we should pay for that war, that we should not go to war and charge it to the children and grandchildren.

Around the same time, President Bush came to the Congress and asked for major tax cuts for the richest Americans. Again, the Presiding Officer and I opposed these tax cuts and said, at a minimum, if we are going to give tax cuts to the richest Americans, we need to find a way to pay for them. There was no interest on that side of the aisle when they were in the majority in paying for the tax cuts.

Then soon after that, President Bush came to this body and the House, where the Presiding Officer and I served in those days, and asked for a huge subsidy for the drug companies and the insurance companies in the name of Medicare privatization. We both opposed that, but not only did we oppose it because we thought it wasn't done right—it was not the way to provide a drug benefit to seniors—but it was not paid for either. There was nary an outcry on that side of the aisle.

So when it was a \$1 trillion war, tax cuts for the richest Americans, and subsidies for the drug and insurance companies, there was no interest in paying for it; just charge that to the grandchildren. But now that it is workers who lose jobs, people who lose their insurance, people who then lose their homes, there seems to be an outcry: We can't do this.

Forget the statistics; forget that there are 900,000 Americans losing their unemployment; forget the numbers. Listen to what people say. I am going to read four letters from around my State. I know the Presiding Officer gets them from Boulder and Colorado Springs and Denver. I know my colleagues get them from Tallahassee and Omaha and New York, letters from people who played by the rules, worked hard, lost their jobs through no fault of their own, who keep fighting to find jobs, keep sending out resumes. You

have to do that if you are going to receive unemployment. And then their unemployment insurance ran out.

I wonder sometimes if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who are voting no every time we try to bring this up, if they know anybody who lost a job, if they know anybody who lost insurance, if they know anybody who lost a home. I plead with them, I ask them, the people who have voted no, to try some empathy. Try to imagine you are a father or a mother and you have lost a job, lost your insurance. You have a sick child. You are borrowing money. You are trying every week to find a job, and you are three payments behind on your home. You have to sit down at dinner one night—a pretty inadequate dinner because you are stretching every cent you have—and you have to explain to your son and daughter, 10- and 12-year-olds, that they will have to move out of their room, out of the house.

Where are we going to go?

I don't know yet, but we don't have much space. What you have collected in your room, we will have to give some of that away.

What school will I go to?

We don't know that yet either.

I wish they would think of the human cost of what this means when people can't get unemployment insurance or can't get assistance in continuing health care insurance, so-called COBRA, with the subsidy the government paid for the last year and a half—something that had never been done before—so people can keep their health insurance.

Zoe from Columbiana, a county just south of Youngstown, writes:

I lost my job at the end of August. Until then I was gainfully employed. I worked hard to support my 13 year old twins at home. I am 50 years old. If [unemployment insurance] is not extended, things don't look good for my family. We have lived in a rural area for 12 years and chose this community because it is great for the kids. My house is not fancy or expensive. We don't waste money. We are falling behind payments on our electric bill. Pretty soon our service might be cut. We are just trying to hang on. Please make opponents of the extension realize that most people who are unemployed are not lazy. We lost our jobs, which can happen to anyone. Please help me.

My colleagues don't understand, people voting against this don't understand that unemployment insurance is not welfare; it is insurance. You pay into it when you are working. You get help when you lose your job. That is the whole point. Most people hope they never draw unemployment insurance, of course. But that is what insurance is. Just like car insurance, you hope you don't have to use it. If you have health insurance, you hope you don't have to use it except for regular check-ups.

Monica from Hamilton County—Cincinnati, Norwood, that area, southwest Ohio—writes:

My son was laid off last year. He soon enrolled in college at Cincinnati State to ob-

tain an engineering degree because he was hoping to be more marketable in the future. He works hard. He is doing well. He is excited about a new life. But soon his [unemployment insurance] will expire. With other expenses, he is now afraid he may have to quit school and not be able to support his son. Please continue to work to pass an unemployment extension right away. This support is so vital to so many people right now.

Joseph from Stark County writes:

My July 4th will be nothing to celebrate since I will be out of unemployment benefits. Folks are not finding the jobs or the income to supplant the cash that goes to pay their mortgages and other expenses. Helping a whole lot of people to prevent another failure—like massive foreclosures—will save more in the long run. Please consider a vote to help us.

He is right. The thing about unemployment benefits, it doesn't just help the family who gets the benefits; it helps them pay insurance and helps them stay in their home. Think of the ripple effect when they don't get it. It means if your home is foreclosed on, your next door neighbor's home declines in value. And then two streets away, somebody else is foreclosed on. Somebody else is foreclosed on across the street. The whole neighborhood begins to unravel. These are people's personal stories, people's lives. It absolutely matters.

The other thing unemployment benefits do—JOHN McCAIN, the Republican Presidential candidate, one of his top economic advisers said unemployment is the best stimulus to the economy because every dollar put in the pocket of Joseph from Stark County or Monica from Cincinnati or Zoe from Columbiana County, every dollar we give them in unemployment compensation gets spent.

It is spent. It is spent in Canton and Cincinnati and Lisbon and East Liverpool. The dollars are spent going into the economy, and they have a multiplier effect that Senator McCAIN's economic adviser used to talk about, that that multiplier effect means generating economic benefits for everyone in the community—the hardware store, the local school, because you pay your property taxes, all the things that come with that.

The last letter I will read is from Gerald from Wood County, south of Toledo, Bowling Green. Wood County is the site of the terrible tornado in Millbury that happened a couple weeks ago, where we are working with President Obama to get help for people whose homes were destroyed, and there were many. Gerald writes:

I know Republicans are holding an extension to unemployment benefits. Quite frankly it makes me sick.

I'm unemployed and am looking for a job—but the jobs are not out there.

Most people must not realize what will happen when unemployment insurance runs out.

We will suddenly have millions of people without the support they need to live on. Just think of what that will do to the nation's economy.

Again, this is not a welfare program. It is an insurance program. It is not

something people want to stay on. They have to show they are working to find a job. They have to continue to apply for jobs during this whole period. Most people in this country want to work. Most people want to protect their family and provide for their family and be good citizens.

This is a bridge. Unemployment benefits—it is a bridge that has gone on longer than we had hoped because of the terrible economy President Obama inherited in January 2009, where three-quarters of a million jobs were lost that month. There has been some good economic news. Ohio, my State, in April had more jobs created than any other State in the country—37,000. Not enough, not where we need to go, not sustained yet, but some good economic news.

But the unemployment benefits provide that bridge so people can get along until they find that job where they can begin again to rebuild their lives and join the middle class, as most of these people have been a part of for most of their lives.

So I ask my colleagues, this time please vote to extend unemployment benefits, please support the help for COBRA, health insurance so people can stay insured and can get their lives in order until the economy improves enough where they are actually able to find a job.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Iowa.

APPROVING THE USE AND SALE OF E15 GASOLINE

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about the Federal Government's unnecessary and unacceptable delay in deciding to approve the use and sale of E15 gasoline at all the gasoline stations in this country.

Last Friday, we were told by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy that they will not make a decision on E15, a gasoline blend that includes 15 percent ethanol, until sometime this fall. Quite frankly, this is an abdication of responsibility, and it couldn't come at a worse time.

To give a little history for those who don't understand this, we have for about 30 years now had approval of a blend of 10 percent ethanol with gasoline. In the old days, it was called gasohol; now it is called E10. When you pull into your gasoline station, you will see E10 pumps all over. There used to be big signs. Now it is hardly noticed because it is so widely used. I will get into that more later.

There has been testing done over about the last 15 years or more as to how much ethanol you can actually use in a gasoline blend without hurting any of the engines or vehicles we use in America. A lot of testing has gone on, and the results of those tests have shown there is absolutely no problem if you increase from 10 percent to 15 percent. As a matter of fact, a lot of the tests that have been done privately show that maybe as much as 20 to 25 percent could be added without any damage whatsoever.

This issue of approval of E15 has been at the EPA and the Department of Energy for a long time. Increasing the blend rate—that is what we call it, the blend rate—from 10 percent to 15 percent is critical to reducing our addiction to oil and accelerating the transition to biofuels. We all understand how important this is. It will strengthen our national security, create jobs, boost our economy, and help the environment.

What makes the dithering at EPA and the Department of Energy all the more baffling and outrageous is that it is happening in the midst of the appalling catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico. The blowout at the BP Deepwater Horizon well has cast a spotlight on the terrible price we pay for our dependency on petroleum. But instead of spurring EPA and the Department of Energy into action, they have hit the snooze button and given themselves 5 or 6 more months to try to reach a decision. We can't wait until the fall. In the face of the BP disaster, we need a decision on E15 with the utmost urgency.

We have decried our dependence on oil for decades. Going back to the mid-seventies, we have talked—and we have talked and we have talked—about the national security risks associated with our ever-increasing oil dependency. We have decried the fact that we are dependent on oil from nations that are unstable or unfriendly, or both, to the United States. We have been embroiled in conflict after conflict, war after war, in the Middle East because of oil. As we have talked, our total oil usage and our oil imports have risen steadily.

In recent years, there have been some glimmers of hope. In 2007, we passed the Energy Independence and Security Act which mandates an increase in the efficiency of our automobiles and light trucks as well as increasing levels of biofuels in our transportation sector. These two steps—increasing vehicle efficiencies and encouraging the use of domestic alternative fuels—are the two fastest and most effective ways to reduce our dependency on petroleum-based fuels in transportation.

In particular, I wish to highlight what we have accomplished with biofuels. In just the past decade, we have increased the contribution of biofuels for highway transportation from about 2 percent in the year 2000 to almost 10 percent today. I want to repeat that because I don't think most

Americans grasp the significance of what our biofuels industry has accomplished in just one decade. Current ethanol production exceeds 9 percent and is quickly approaching 10 percent of total gasoline demand in the United States. To put that in perspective, ethanol now contributes more to our transportation fuel demand than all of our oil imports from Mexico, Venezuela, or Nigeria. I will repeat that. Ethanol contributes more to our transportation fuel than our oil imports from Mexico, or Venezuela, or Nigeria. Only imports from Canada and Saudi Arabia provide more fuel for transport than our domestic ethanol industry. So this is tremendously heartening news.

Congress recognized the potential of biofuels in the 2007 Energy bill. We called for increasing levels of biofuels that roughly match what the industry has accomplished to date. In that bill, we called for that contribution to rise steadily over the next 12 years, reaching 36 billion gallons by 2022. That would put us on a trajectory to get about 25 percent of our transportation fuels from domestic biofuels by 2025. We need to stay on that trajectory because biofuels offer one of our very best alternatives for reducing dependence on petroleum.

However, while our biofuels industry has stepped up to the plate, our fuel markets are lagging behind. Today, nearly all ethanol is used in the form, as I said earlier, of E10, a blend of 10 percent ethanol with gasoline, used in almost all of our cars and light trucks. Since ethanol production is very close to 10 percent of total gasoline demand, we are at what is commonly called the blend wall. In other words, our ethanol production is close to the total amount we can use at that 10 percent blend rate, so we have this blend wall of 10 percent.

So we have to do three things. First and second, we must transition to a fleet of cars and light trucks capable of using higher blends, and we must make higher blends available through the installation of blender pumps. Senator LUGAR and I introduced a bill to accomplish both of these actions last fall. Our Consumer Fuels and Vehicles Choice Act of 2009, which is S. 1627, would mandate the manufacture of an increasing number of flex-fuel vehicles as well as installation of increasing numbers of blender pumps.

Again, this is not some pie-in-the-sky thing. I would point out that in the nation of Brazil, every single car produced in Brazil—by Ford, I might add, or by General Motors, I can also add, or by the Japanese manufacturers that are manufacturing cars in Brazil—every single car is 100 percent flex-fuel, and the cost of doing that is—well, if you did it to every car, it would be almost minuscule. So we need every car produced in America to be totally flex-fuel, just as they are in Brazil. That is what our bill would mandate.

Then, we need to increase the number of blender pumps out there. This is