

after year when the Republicans didn't care about the budget deficit. They voted for hundreds of billions of dollars in spending for a war that I know the Presiding Officer and I both voted against that was not paid for. They voted for tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans that were not paid for. They voted for a giveaway to the drug and insurance companies—a bailout—in the name of Medicare privatization that was not paid for. Again, they voted for these huge government expenditures and charged it to our grandchildren and said it was OK. But now that it is the unemployed middle-class, working Americans who are laid off, they think we cannot do this because of the budget deficit.

What are their priorities of the Republican Senators who voted against the unemployment extension? They were willing to charge it to our grandchildren to fight the war in Iraq, they are willing to bail out the drug and insurance companies, and they were willing to charge it to our grandchildren when it came to tax cuts for the richest Americans. When it came to workers losing their jobs, they are not willing to move forward and help them. It is amazing.

The last letter comes from Jeff from Butler County, a conservative county north of Cincinnati in southwest Ohio, one of the most conservative counties in Ohio.

I worked at my job for 36 years till my employer shut down our plant recently.

All those years I paid into unemployment.

While I'd prefer to have a job and earn a decent wage, I now need unemployment benefits until that happens.

Think of the big picture. The people paying into the system should be the first to receive benefits.

Jeff is right. He understands that he paid into unemployment for 36 years, and now Republican Senators won't let him draw from that fund. I just don't get it when I think of what this does to people.

I guess I will close with this: I wish the Senators who voted no—and there are 41—on the extension of unemployment—we have had several votes and continue to fall 1 or 2 votes short—I wish they would sit down with a family and listen to them, not respond but listen to a family where workers lost their jobs; listen to the woman talking about losing health care, when she talks about telling her children that they are going to have their home foreclosed on and what are they going to do; explain to their children—they have teenage children, say—explain to them that Mom and Dad lost their jobs and their insurance, and now they have to move out of their house because they cannot afford it.

The children may ask: Where are we going to move?

They would say: We don't know that yet.

What school are we going to go to?

We don't know that yet.

That is why I come to the floor and read letters from people in Ohio. I wish

Senators would listen to people in their States. We get a lot of mail. We come across a lot of numbers and statistics. I wish they would pick up some of the letters they get. I know Senators all over this country are getting letters like this. There are very few States—maybe energy States or heavy agricultural States—that haven't been afflicted with unemployment the way California, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Florida, and so many States have. Maybe they don't understand. But those Senators from States that have high unemployment—and that is most of the country—I wish they would read their letters and hear what people are saying.

We are going to try again this week. I ask my colleagues to vote to extend unemployment benefits. It is morally the right thing to do in terms of economic policy. It is the right policy, and we should not wait any longer.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, on Monday evening I came to the floor and spoke from the heart about my friend Senator Robert Byrd. I wanted to take the opportunity to submit a more comprehensive statement about Senator Byrd and his legacy.

As I looked at his empty desk with flowers on it, I thought back to last summer when we lost another giant, Senator Ted Kennedy. And what distinguishes Senator Byrd, like Senator Kennedy, from others was his unbelievable, never-ending commitment to the people he represented and to this country.

It was never a question of Senator Byrd's length of service—though his was exceptional but rather his fierce sense of fighting for West Virginians. As he told the New York Times in 2005, "I'm proud I gave hope to my people."

Senator Byrd was, of course, the Nation's longest-serving Senator. And he was a legend, for sure. When I came to here, I learned firsthand that he always met with the incoming Senators, to give them an introduction to the rules of the road, the procedures and dignity of the Senate, and to share his rev-

erence for the Constitution. The image that I will always have of Robert C. Byrd is him reaching inside his suit pocket and bringing out the Constitution, which along with the Bible was what he cherished most.

Senator Byrd was a giant in the Senate and a champion for America's working families. We will miss his eloquence, his sharp intellect, and his passionate oratory.

He was one of our Nation's foremost historians of the Senate. He literally wrote the book on the Senate, a four-volume history. And he was not only an expert on the rules of the Senate, he was a fierce defender of its traditions and its role in our democracy.

Senator Byrd fought to make sure every American had a chance to live the American dream because he lived the American dream.

He was born in coal country in southern West Virginia, the youngest of five children. His mother died before he was a year old, and he was raised by his aunt and uncle on a farm with no telephone, electricity or running water.

He went on to graduate first in his high school class and married his high school sweetheart, Erma, to whom he was devoted throughout their 68 years of marriage until her death in 2006. To support his wife and two daughters in the early years, he worked as a gas station attendant, a grocery store clerk and as a welder in a shipyard during World War II.

A naturally gifted speaker, he was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1946 and to the West Virginia Senate in 1950. He won a seat in Congress in 1952 and his U.S. Senate seat 6 years later. He had such a passion for education that he remains the only American ever to earn a law degree while serving in Congress. President John F. Kennedy presented it to him at American University in 1963.

His career in Congress spanned 12 presidents, and he cast more 18,500 votes in the Senate. He was Senate majority leader, chairman of the Appropriations Committee and President pro tempore of the Senate. He fought every day to make life better for the people of West Virginia and for all Americans.

I can tell you, Mr. President, coming from the largest State in the Union, we have had our share of problems. We have had floods and fires and droughts and pests. And every single time, after every earthquake or storm or other disaster, Senator FEINSTEIN and I came to our colleagues to say that California needed the help of the U.S. government.

Every time we needed assistance, Senator Byrd, as the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, opened his doors and his heart to us, sharing his experiences and helping us in all of these cases when we were so in need. I am sure many of my colleagues can recount similar experiences. He was always there for us.

And I remember so well his leadership in trying to bring the troops home

from Iraq. Twenty-three of us had stood up and said no to that war, and afterwards, we worried very much about what would happen with our troops in what was shaping up to be a long war with no exit strategy. Opening up his office here in the Capitol, Senator Byrd organized us, saying, "We need to talk about ways that we can bring this war to an end."

He cared so much about everything he did here, from working to create opportunity for West Virginians and all Americans to maintaining the traditions and the dignity of the Senate. And for me, just to have been in his presence and to watch him work has really been an amazing experience, and so I am proud to pay tribute to him today.

Senator Byrd stayed here through thick and thin, with a cane or a wheelchair, through the sheer force of will, suffering to be in this place that he loved so much and that he respected so much. There isn't a Member on either side of the aisle that didn't respect Senator Byrd for his intelligence, his strength, his extraordinary biography, and his dedication to the people of his State.

What a legacy he leaves. It is a great loss for his family, for all of us in the Senate, for the people of his beloved State of West Virginia and for all Americans. I extend my deepest condolences to his family.

REMEMBERING CODE TALKER MOSE BELLMARD

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it was 2 years ago that I worked to pass and have signed into law by the President the Code Talkers Recognition Act, a bill to give Congressional Medals to the many Native American Code Talkers who served in World Wars I and II. Today, I wish to honor an original Code Talker, Mose Bellmard, a Kaw Indian who bravely served our country during World War I. As a veteran and ardent supporter of the armed services, I always take pride when I have the opportunity to recognize the service of fine Oklahomans like him.

Bellmard, considered by many to be one of the last hereditary chiefs of the Kaw Indians, was born on February 16, 1891, to Josephine and Leonard Bellmard in Indian territory. U.S. involvement in World War I began when Bellmard was 26, and, even though Native Americans were not yet considered full citizens of the United States, he was one of the first to volunteer. He trained at Fort Sill in Lawton, OK, was made a 1st lieutenant with Company E in Oklahoma's 1st Infantry Unit.

After a few weeks of training, he deployed to the frontlines of the war in France. The setting was dangerous, and a number of his men were quickly killed during routine patrols of their area. Upon investigation, Bellmard realized that the Germans had painted sections of barbed wire that allowed them to easily spot his patrolmen's

movements. Creatively, he thought to use a large bed mattress—instead of a person—to draw fire so his units could locate and neutralize the enemy. The scheme apparently worked, and in addition to saving lives his unit was able to use the tactic to destroy a number of German gun installations along the Western front.

But this would not be Bellmard's only contribution to the war effort, nor would it be his most impactful. When Bellmard entered the war, the Germans had been able to decipher nearly every one of the Allies' codes, making it difficult for them to operate in secrecy. Bellmard recognized this problem, and as the leader of the Native American unit saw a tremendous asset in his soldiers' diverse languages. These languages were completely foreign to Europeans and had never been written down. They were ideal candidates for new codes.

Lieutenant Bellmard suggested to his superiors that his unit's men be scattered throughout troop dispatch points as communications officers. There, he reasoned, they would be able to disseminate orders in their native tongues and then translate them back into English. His plan was put into practice and quickly proved to be reliable and secure. Bellmard and his original Code Talkers of Oklahoma allowed many Allied forces to move safely through battle zones without fear of interception, and to this date there are no records of the Central Powers ever cracking their "code."

Bellmard's suggestion carried over into World War II, during which Code Talkers were widely recruited and were critical to the Allied Forces' victory in the Pacific theater. Bellmard's simple idea to use Native American tongues to thwart and confuse enemies proved a lasting and effective tool for the U.S. military. It is fitting he was promoted to the rank of captain for his role.

Unfortunately, Captain Bellmard died before we could thank him personally for his contribution to our freedom. But our thanks are still important, especially as we remember Independence Day and the cost of securing that freedom. We owe our sincere gratitude to all American heroes like Mose Bellmard, and I pray that more emerge in generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL PHILIP C. SKUTA

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a close friend of the Senate, COL Phil Skuta. Over the past 2 years, Colonel Skuta has served as the Director of the Marine Corps Liaison Office to the U.S. Senate.

Throughout Colonel Skuta's service in the Senate he has escorted 14 CODELs to 27 countries. I have traveled with Phil to visit our troops in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Last year, I had the privilege of spending Thanksgiving with the Wyoming Army National Guard 115th Fires

Brigade in Kuwait. With only 2 weeks' notice, Colonel Skuta and his team provided the support to execute this trip. As a selfless leader, he did not task a junior officer to take on the trip. He postponed his Thanksgiving plans with family to be with our troops in the Middle East.

Throughout these travels I got to know Colonel Skuta very well. Colonel Skuta is a native of Williamsport, PA. Phil joined the Marine Corps in 1984 through the Platoon Leader's Class program while studying at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

From Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm to Joint Guardian and Iraqi Freedom, Colonel Skuta has led his marines through many trying and dangerous situations. On his most recent deployment, he led the Second Battalion, Seventh Marines into Iraq to train and conduct operations with the Iraqi Security Forces. The 2d Battalion, seventh Marines' primary area of operations was Ramadi and west of the Euphrates River in Al Anbar province.

Throughout his career he has handed down from one marine to the next his excellent leadership skills. Colonel Skuta's example will teach the next generation that will come to know the Marine Corps. Under Phil's leadership, steady hand and sharp instincts, the USMC Senate liaison team has well served General Conway and all marines. The USMC liaison office has provided invaluable support for the Senate.

While the U.S. Senate and Marine Corps are losing a valuable and trusted ally in this body, we wish Colonel Skuta well on his next assignment to be Director of the USMC Strategic Initiatives Group.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO AL SMITH

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today I recognize the exemplary work of Allen Smith, Jr., of Helena, MT. This week, Al will be awarded the American Association for Justice Partnership Award in recognition for his work as the executive director of the Montana Trial Lawyers Association. I commend Al for all his work on behalf of the justice system and Montana's strong network of legal advocates.

The mission of the American Association of Justice is "to promote a fair and effective justice system—and to support the work of attorneys in their efforts to ensure that any person who is injured by the misconduct or negligence of others can obtain justice in America's courtrooms, even when taking on the most powerful interests." I can think of no one that reflects this mission more than Al Smith.

Since joining the team at the Montana Trial Lawyers Association in 1997, Al has shown a commitment to promoting justice and fairness in our