

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 3017 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements of Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur with an amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2847, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A House message to accompany H.R. 2847, an act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice and Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 3310 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 3311 (to the amendment No. 3310), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to talk about what I believe should be our top priority, almost our exclusive focus in terms of immediate work, and that is the issue of jobs and the economy. Doing so, I applaud the fact that finally as a body we are somewhat focused on that. We are debating a bill having to do with job creation, economic growth. But at the same time, I find it unfortunate, really sad, that as we take up that top agenda item for the American people we do so by taking up a bill of the majority leader, which is fine, but in a way under which he completely shuts out any opportunity for amendment on the floor of the Senate.

Again, I find that process really unfair and unfortunate. The fact that

every Republican idea, every Republican amendment is just being shut out is really frustrating, even angering to me as a Republican. But the issue isn't Republican and Democrat. The issue is what is good and right for the American people. The fact is that ideas and amendments on the Senate floor, which is supposed to be a place of unlimited debate, virtually unlimited ability to offer good ideas, to offer amendments, that is being completely subverted, and all amendments are being shut out.

Because of that, I am going to ask unanimous consent that we break out of that logjam, that we break out of that bitter partisanship and consider, with an open mind, one amendment I am bringing forward. But let me spend a few minutes outlining that amendment.

As we look on the job picture and the economy over the last year, as I talk about that job picture over the last year with folks in my State, I hear two dominant concerns. No. 1, we are still in a heck of a recession. The job creation that was promised a year ago with the stimulus just hasn't panned out. The promise of staying below 8 percent unemployment, minimizing that job loss, clearly, tragically, unfortunately never panned out. The President promised his stimulus would keep us below 8 percent. Unfortunately, as we all know, unemployment nationally went above 10 percent. Right now it still hovers near 10 percent, just a shade below that. And, again, unfortunately, the Federal Reserve has issued a report recently warning that sort of high level of unemployment would be with us for several years to come.

What I hear from Louisianans all around the State—and I would certainly trust what Members from every State of the Union hear in their home States—is that we need a better model to create jobs, to jump-start this economy, to get us out of this serious recession.

The other big theme and concern I hear all around Louisiana is: What are you all doing about this unsustainable level of spending and debt? I share that fear. I share that concern. Even as we struggle to get out of this recession—and we are not near there yet—I am fearful that the next economic crisis is coming based on spending and debt, unsustainable levels of spending and debt. We are near debt levels today comparable to where this Nation was at the end of World War II compared to GDP.

I don't like the idea of going into heavy debt for anything, but if we are going to do it as a nation, surely the reason we had with World War II, the need to build a modern Army overnight, unlike any military we had ever had before that, to defeat Hitler, to preserve freedom and democracy, literally our way of life, surely that reason is a pretty darn good one. That is why we as a nation went into debt, got up to 120 percent of GDP at the end of World War II.

The "greatest generation" that did that, that sacrificed and fought and won that war, turned around after the war and wiped away that debt, sent it down with great prosperity and fiscal restraint in the 1950s. But today we are nearing those same historic high levels of debt, with our overall debt now at about 100 percent of GDP, but, obviously, without the historical circumstances such as we had in World War II.

The other thing we don't have is that plan to get rid of it, that determination to reverse course and get our fiscal house in order because we don't have that plan either. In fact, we are in a huge fiscal debt hole, and we have not even stopped digging. In fact, the only thing this administration and this liberal Congress have done in the last year is to put down the shovel digging and used a backhoe instead, specifically to pass a budget that takes that historically high level of debt and doubles it in 5 years and triples it in 10 years.

In the face of those two enormous challenges, we need to create jobs much more effectively than we have in the last year, and we need to get spending and debt under control.

I proposed last March legislation that I and my cosponsors called the no-cost stimulus act. The no-cost stimulus act is about just that, creating great American jobs, stimulating the economy, helping us get out of this recession, using a fundamentally different model than the last year, at no cost to the taxpayer, not continuing to drop hard-earned taxpayer dollars out of helicopters—a fundamentally different approach at no cost to the taxpayer.

In fact, it will produce new Federal revenue and lower our level of deficit and debt.

How do we do that? We do it by focusing on our domestic energy sector, by opening access to domestic energy we have in great quantities in this country, by decreasing our reliance on foreign sources and creating great American jobs in the process. Again, we do this by opening access to our tremendous energy reserves we have.

We are the only country on Earth that has major, significant energy resources but that puts 95 percent of them off limits under Federal law and says: No, no, no, no, you cannot touch that. You cannot touch 95 percent of our domestic energy resources.

We need to change that both to improve our energy situation and to create good American jobs because the answer on the energy front is not either/or. It is not either drill for traditional sources, such as oil and gas, or develop new technology, new research and development. The American people know it is not either/or; it is all of the above, and we need to do all of the above aggressively.

This bill fits right into that commonsense, all-of-the-above mentality of the American people. We open access to domestic energy reserves. We produce

more energy here at home. In doing so, we grow great American jobs—2 million long-term, sustainable, well-paying jobs. In doing that, we increase GDP by as much as \$10 trillion over the next 30 years.

But we accomplish even more. We lessen our dependence on foreign sources. We do not spend additional taxpayer dollars and go deeper into debt. By creating these jobs and domestic energy, we actually increase Federal revenue. Because what happens when we open our energy resources for production? That production comes online, royalty goes to the Federal Government—new Federal revenue—and we decrease deficit and debt. It truly is a win-win-win.

Part of that is also focusing on the nuclear side, developing what many folks, including the President, have talked about but which we have not accomplished yet: a true nuclear renaissance, a true streamlining of nuclear programs so we can dramatically increase that capacity, particularly producing electricity.

Finally, let me mention the other part of the win-win-win which is in this legislation. We devote some significant portion of the new, additional Federal revenue created to alternative energy research and development. So, again, it is not either/or; it is all of the above.

This proposal has significant support. I am very proud to say we now have 18 Senators who are coauthors of the proposal. There is a companion bill in the House with 50 coauthors there. So it is a significant proposal with significant support. It represents a win-win-win for the American people and the American economy in this time of serious recession.

So why shouldn't this be actively considered and debated and voted on, on the floor of the Senate? We are supposed to be considering a jobs bill. That is progress. At least, finally, we are focused on jobs. But why is every alternative, every amendment being shut out by the majority leader, including this valid alternative?

So in that vein, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order for me to offer amendment No. 3318, which is filed at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Well, again, I came to the Senate hearing this was the body of full and open debate, full and open consideration of amendments. The problem is my experience here in 5 years has been anything but that, including yet again this week on this legislation, as we are trying to address the top issue of the American people: jobs and the economy.

Why can't we have a full debate? Why can't we have open consideration of amendments, including this alternative model to continuing to spend

taxpayer dollars, increasing deficit and debt at an alarming rate. Again, I find it unfortunate that is the partisan procedural position we are in. But I will continue with my Senate coauthors, with the 50 House coauthors of this no-cost stimulus proposal to advance this idea as part of a reasonable solution to grow good jobs without having to spend another trillion dollars of hard-earned taxpayer dollars and increased deficit and debt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I come down to the floor and I hear the Senator from Louisiana saying he has been in the Senate for years and he cannot believe we cannot debate these things. I have watched over the last 13 months since President Obama took the oath of office—13 months and less than a week—and I am incredulous the Senator from Louisiana would say what he says; that we, in fact, do not allow debate in this institution, when more than 100 times, just in the last 13 months—I think maybe 110 times; I cannot keep count because we add a few every day or every week—more than 100 times the other party, the Republicans, have obstructed, have delayed, have stopped us from moving forward.

We have had plenty of time to debate. We will stay here weekends. We will stay here evenings. But when it is not debate they want, it is to block things—maybe talking things to death is the way they block things; maybe they just object to things—but time and time again we have had the “slow walk” on health care, so we have not been able to put a bill on the President's desk. That is not because people do not have ideas. It is not because people want to shut down debate. It is because they have tried to stop these bills on issue after issue after issue.

I remember something so simple as the children's health insurance bill, which President Bush vetoed but many people in both parties supported. They tried to slow that down. They tried to slow the Lilly Ledbetter legislation which we passed to try to make sure women doing the same job in the same place are paid as much as men doing the same job in the same place.

I could stand here, Mr. President, as you could, representing your constituents in Santa Fe and Taos and all over New Mexico—you could do the same as I can do, representing my constituents in Toledo and Dayton and Galion and Saint Clairsville—and point out that when we have tried to get things done, they have blocked it.

We do want bipartisanship. But the public, more than anything, wants us to get things done. The Senator from Louisiana has been one of the leaders, in conjunction with one of his other regional Senators, who has said health care could be President Obama's Waterloo. There are people in this institution on the other side of the aisle—not

all of them; the senior Senator from my State, GEORGE VOINOVICH, has cooperated a lot of times on a lot of things, unlike some of his colleagues, but there are senior Senators on that side of the aisle, where their goal is to see the President of the United States fail. If the President of the United States fails, this country does not move forward.

We are in the worst economic times of my lifetime, brought on by terrible policies in the last 8 years: bank deregulation, tax cuts for the rich, a war not paid for, a giveaway to drug companies and the insurance companies in the name of Medicare privatization, causing all these problems that we inherited a year ago, and all they want to do is stop the jobs bill. They voted last night—the Senator who just complained about not being able to debate voted last night not to even allow the bill on the floor, as he did on health care, as he has done on issue after issue after issue.

It is not personal to me what they are doing, but it is certainly wrong when they try to block issue after issue, bill after bill. We can disagree on what we need to do to bring this country forward. We can disagree on the jobs bill. We can disagree on the health care bill. But we ought to be able to agree we can have full debate, move forward, work on this legislation, and pass it in a reasonable time so every Senator does not talk it to death in the way of stopping it, in the way of obstructionism.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now recess until 2:15 p.m., as provided for under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BEGICH).

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

METRO SAFETY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the current state of affairs in the Washington Metro and why we need to bring about change. The Washington Metro, America's subway, is in trouble. I fear for its safety. I fear for its operational reliance. I fear for the well-being of both the passengers and the workers who ride Metro.

Every morning, I am afraid to wake up and find out that there has been another accident or death on the Washington Metro. Most recently, a Metro