

opposition to the regime, halt the development of nuclear weapons, and support the Iranian people's drive for freedom.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am necessarily absent for the vote today on the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, S. 510. If I were able to attend, I would have supported the motion to proceed to the bill.

NEED FOR BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION OF TAX ISSUES

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the need for Congress to resolve an issue of importance to millions of Americans: specifically, the need for a bipartisan agreement on taxes.

As the end of the year approaches, Americans face an extraordinary level of uncertainty regarding a number of tax issues: the 2001/2003 tax cuts, including the tax rates on dividends and capital gains, the alternative minimum tax, the estate tax, and last but not least, the extension of many expiring tax provisions affecting individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and even members of the U.S. Armed Forces. During this lameduck session, Congress and the White House have an opportunity to work together to develop a package that addresses all of these.

In my view, we should not be raising taxes on any business or individual during a fragile economic recovery. The private sector—this country's job creation engine—continues to struggle, lacking the required stability and confidence needed to expand and hire new workers. Individuals, in turn, have been significantly impacted, further inhibiting economic growth. Uncertainty is a major factor, and one way to reduce uncertainty is to lock down our tax policy for the next few years, giving taxpayers a clear sense of what to expect as we enter 2011.

On the tax extenders, I bring to the Senate's attention a letter just sent to Congress today from over 1,200 organizations located around the country. These are businesses, nonprofit organizations, and organizations representing our men and women in uniform. It points out the crucial nature of the expiring provisions, and asks Congress to extend them before the end of the year. This is a remarkable letter. We often hear from the business community about the importance of tax extenders for job creation, but here we have not only the business community speaking up, but also affordable housing organizations, community development organizations, and the National Education Association and the National Science Teachers Association. The letter is signed by the Alliance to Save Energy and numerous renewable energy organizations. It includes the Association of the United States Navy and the Re-

serve Officer Association. It includes agricultural organizations and technology councils.

In short, this is a statement from a breadth of organizations which do not often work together. I think we have to take this kind of letter very seriously and consider its message carefully. And its message is that these provisions are very important to millions of Americans, and that our failure to extend them could have a significant dampening effect on the economy. And I also want to be clear about something: this should be a "clean" extension of these policies—we shouldn't be raising taxes on other businesses at the same time and thereby blunting the impact of this important action for the economy.

One of the best known of the extenders is the R&D tax credit. It actually expired at the end of 2009, so America's innovative companies—many of them with operations in Massachusetts—have been wondering all year if Congress is going to reinstate the most visible public policy that encourages new ideas and technologies in this country. This is an area where our commitment should not be in doubt.

There are incentives for the production of domestic alternative energy sources and energy efficient products such as hybrid vehicles, energy efficient appliances, homes, and windows. Without these incentives, many producers will not be able to make these products. In fact, many have already discontinued operations in the absence of credits which expired at the end of 2009. The deductions for donations of funds, property, food, and equipment to charities is also hanging in the balance of this package.

There is the deduction for State and local sales taxes. Think about individuals losing the ability to deduct State and local taxes from their Federal taxes. There is the deduction for teacher classroom expenses. Teachers spending their own money for their classrooms is more common than we like to think about, and the least we can do is allow them to deduct those expenses from their tax bill. There is the credit for employers who continue to pay employees while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. This is an important support mechanism for our men and women in uniform, and we should ensure that it remains in place. These are just a few of the tax provisions which have expired or will soon expire. I invite my colleagues to review the Joint Tax Committee's list of the expiring provisions. It is crucial for Congress to act this year to extend as many of them as possible.

Ultimately, I believe we need to reform our Tax Code to lower tax rates and broaden the base. I know Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY have already begun that process with a Finance Committee hearing on tax reform earlier this year, and I salute them for starting that conversation. We look forward to working on such a package of reforms on a bipartisan basis in the

112th Congress, but for now, extending the expiring provisions should be a top priority for the remainder of this Congress.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the November 16 letter from over 1,200 organizations from around the country to which I referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NOVEMBER 16, 2010.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS: The undersigned represent millions of individuals, businesses, organizations and members of the U.S. Armed Forces. We urge Congress to pass legislation in the lame duck session to extend critical tax provisions that, while temporary in nature, are critical to our economy. It is of the utmost importance to all of us, and to the health of the U.S. economy, that this extension be enacted before the end of the year and apply seamlessly, at least through 2011.

Expiration of many of these provisions has already caused job losses, and the uncertainty around their extension will lead to further dislocations just as the fragile economic recovery is beginning. We all look forward to working with you on this issue in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

(Signed by over 1,200 organizations)

NATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, each November we set aside a day of healing for those who have lost someone to suicide. I rise today to again recognize Saturday, November 20 as National Survivors of Suicide Day. In 1999, a Senate resolution created this annual event through the efforts of Senator HARRY REID who lost his father to suicide. This year, on November 20, over 270 conferences will take place in the U.S. and around the world to allow survivors of suicide the opportunity to connect with others who have experienced the tragedy of suicide loss and to allow for healing interactions.

The importance of this day is amplified by the shocking statistics on suicide—suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Nationwide, approximately 90 lives are lost to suicide each day and over 34,000 die by suicide each year. Suicide is truly an epidemic that devastates thousands of families in the United States each year.

In my State of South Dakota, one suicide occurs every 3 to 4 days and 107 lives are lost each year. These statistics place South Dakota among a group of Western States that consistently has a higher rate of suicide than the rest of the country. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among all South Dakotans and is the second leading cause of death of South Dakotans between the ages of 15–34. Suicide among American Indians in South Dakota is of particular concern—the suicide rate for American Indians ages 15–34 is more than three times higher than the national average and the suicide rate for

the Rosebud Sioux Tribe is the highest in the world.

Last year, 16-year-old Dana Lee Jetty, a tribal member from the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation in North Dakota, who lost her 14-year-old sister to suicide spoke before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs:

We need to make sure that our communities and our people know how to reach out for help if they need it and we need to make sure that the help is there when they ask.

We must take Ms. Jetty's words to heart and provide tribes with the resources they need to implement effective suicide prevention programs. It is critical to strengthen the social fabric to help improve mental health with effective and culturally sensitive prevention programs.

It is necessary to expand access to mental health services nationwide, including a focus on education, prevention and intervention. Furthermore, we need to acknowledge the obstacles that suicide survivors face during their grieving and encourage the involvement of survivors in healing activities and prevention programs. I believe with appropriate support and treatment, suicide survivors can lead effective advocacy efforts to reduce the incidence of suicide and find healing themselves.

The loss of so many lives to suicide is truly a crisis, and it is imperative to provide support for all those left behind. It is my hope that National Suicide Survivors Day will promote the broad based support that each survivor deserves and increase awareness of the need for greater efforts in addressing the root causes of suicide in Indian Country and throughout the Nation.

NEW START TREATY

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong opposition to the administration's New START Treaty. I do so after great deliberation and after initial disposition to support the treaty because of the generic importance of these types of treaties for our Nation. But with what I have learned from classified intelligence information, I cannot in good conscience support this treaty. I have written a classified letter summarizing my views that is available to all members in Senate security; I urge them to read it, even as I try now with a few unclassified comments to explain my position.

When the administration announced this new treaty, we were told that its goal was to reduce strategic nuclear forces in a manner that would make America safer and enhance nuclear stability. That goal may be admirable, but unfortunately, the deal the administration has struck with Moscow falls well short. Consequently, I believe the administration's New START Treaty has been oversold and overhyped.

The first thing we must all understand about this treaty is that it forces the United States to reduce unilaterally our forces, such as missiles, bomb-

ers, and warheads, in order to meet treaty limits. On the other hand, the Russians will actually be allowed to increase their deployed forces because they currently fall below the treaty's limits. This raises a crucial question: exactly what does the United States gain from this treaty in exchange for a one-sided reduction in our deployed forces?

Defenders of this treaty have argued, first, that the treaty places no limits on America's plans for missile defense systems, and second, that our own military will have the flexibility to deploy our strategic forces, such as bombers, submarines, and missiles, in ways that best meet our security interests.

Unfortunately, these explanations simply do not stand up to scrutiny. The United States does not need a treaty with Russia, or any other country, to be free to pursue the missile defense system we need to keep America safe. The United States does not need a treaty to give us the flexibility to deploy our strategic forces as we wish.

Interestingly, the administration's justifications completely dismiss the unilateral statement Russia has made to this treaty that claims the right to withdraw if we expand our missile defenses. This Russian statement is pure and simple manipulation.

At some point down the road, our Nation will need to expand its missile defenses. Because of this unilateral statement, however, the reaction from some in the administration or in Congress will be to reject any expansion lest we upset the Russians and cause them to pull out of this new Treaty. The Russians surely are counting on this reaction. Yet in all the rhetoric in support of this treaty, I have not heard any reasonable explanation for why we would give Russia this lever to use against our legitimate and necessary right to defend ourselves against ballistic missile attack.

For several months, we have listened to the administration's claims that New START will make America more secure by strengthening nuclear stability. In the "Show Me" State, where I come from, and I suspect throughout the rest of the country, claims like this need to be backed up by facts. But if we cannot verify that the Russians are complying with each of the treaty's three central limits, then we have no way of knowing whether we are more secure or not.

The Select Committee on Intelligence has been looking at this issue closely over the past several months. As the vice chairman of this committee, I have reviewed the key intelligence on our ability to monitor this treaty and heard from our intelligence professionals. There is no doubt in my mind that the United States cannot reliably verify the treaty's 1,550 limit on deployed warheads.

As an initial hurdle, the ten annual warhead inspections allowed under the treaty permit us to sample only 2 to 3

percent of the total Russian force. Further, under New START, unlike its predecessor, any given missile can have any number of warheads loaded on it. So even if the Russians fully cooperated in every inspection, these inspections cannot provide conclusive evidence of whether the Russians are complying with the warhead limit.

Let's take an example: say that the United States found a missile that was loaded with more warheads than the Russians declared. While this would be a faulty and suspicious declaration by Russia, we could not necessarily infer from it that they had violated the 1,550 warhead limit—especially because the Russians could always make some excuse for a faulty declaration.

Compounding this verification gap is the current structure of the treaty's warhead limits which would allow Russia to prepare legally to add very large numbers of warheads to its forces in excess of the treaty's limit. For example, the Russians could deploy a missile with only one warhead, but legally flight-test it with six warheads to gain confidence in the increased capability—a practice they could not employ under the original START. The Russians could then store the five extra warheads for each such missile nearby, ready to mate them to the missile on a moment's notice. All of this would be legal.

Further, unlike START, this new treaty places no limit on the number of nondeployed missiles, so the Russians legally could store spare missiles to be mated with the spare warheads. This potential for Russia to "break-out" of the treaty in a short period of time—perhaps without adequate warning to the United States—may undermine the very nuclear stability this administration claims this treaty provides.

Arguably, it also means that, despite the opportunities to cheat, it may be even easier for Russia to circumvent legally the limits of this treaty. That does not sound to me like a great bargain for the United States.

Because the details on verification and breakout of this treaty are classified, I have prepared a full classified assessment that is available to any Senator for review. The key points, however, are not classified and I believe the Senate and the American public need to understand them fully.

Common sense suggests that the worse a treaty partner's arms control compliance record with existing and past treaties, the stronger verification must be for any new treaties. So, exactly what is Russia's record? According to the official State Department reports on arms control compliance, published by this administration and the previous administration, the Russians have previously violated, or are still violating, important provisions of most of the key arms control treaties to which they have been a party, including the original START, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, and