

they now celebrate the fact that they can be on their parents' health insurance automatically. That is a big victory for consumers and a big victory for those families.

I also talk to people who have children who have preexisting conditions and could not get insurance as a result. The law now is, an insurance company cannot deny insurance to a family with a child with preexisting conditions. We also know now that someone who is sick and their health care is very expensive, that they cannot be thrown off their insurance because it costs the insurance company too much money.

We know now, and I hear from small businesses who almost all want to insure their employees but simply cannot because of the high costs, they now are getting a 30-percent tax credit to be able to insure their employees, something, as I said, they wanted to do whether they live in Conneaut in northeast Ohio or Middletown and Hamilton in southwest Ohio. I see that all over my State—in Bowling Green, in Toledo, in Zanesville and Chillacothe and Columbus and Bellaire. We are also seeing that so many senior citizens are getting hit hard by high drug prices.

We have begun. As one of the leaders in that effort on the HELP Committee, Senator BENNET, the Presiding Officer, knows that we have been helpful in now beginning to close that doughnut hole that seniors fall into. After they have had \$2,000 of drug costs, they are still paying the premium every month, but they do not get any coverage until their costs go above \$5,000. That is sort of a cruel bargain that this Congress, for reasons I did not exactly understand—I opposed it back then—passed the drug benefit and inflicted that on seniors. We are beginning to fix that.

We know all that. Those are citizens I talk to about that. Put that aside for a minute, unfortunately, and look at so many elected officials in a State, conservative elected officials, mostly Republicans, who are saying we should repeal the health care law and we should bring back preexisting condition, take 23-year-olds, home from college or home from the service or whatever, and if they do not have TRICARE, throw them off their parents' health care plan, take away the tax cuts to small businesses. That is what they want to do and repeal this health care plan.

My only question is, I guess I am waiting for the first Republican elected official—whether he is an attorney general in Ohio or elsewhere or whether he is a Congressman or she is a Congressman or a Senator—I am waiting for the first one who says: I want to repeal this plan. Take away these consumer protections; I want to repeal this plan and take away health insurance for people who are in high risk pools who are getting insurance now and people down the road who are going to get covered with health insurance, the 50 million Americans who do not have it and the tens of millions of Americans who are

underinsured. I want to hear one of those elected officials, who is saying repeal the health care plan, say they are not going to take their government health insurance. I cannot believe the number of elected officials, mostly Republicans, who have been the beneficiaries of government-sponsored health insurance—taxpayer-financed health insurance for 10 years, 20 years, 30 years—who are saying: No, I want to repeal health insurance for millions of Americans who are about to receive it. Some of them are already getting it; all of them getting better consumer protections.

They will keep their plan, paid for by taxpayers. They want to deny it to others. I am waiting for one of my colleagues—and Republicans around the State and around the country who are calling for this health care law to be repealed—to step up and say: Oh, I am not going to take government insurance either. I am still waiting for that day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

HOME BUYER TAX CREDIT

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, if we want to revive our economy, one thing we can do is to bring back and extend the home buyer tax credit we enacted earlier this year. It was for a limited time. It has expired, but it was hugely successful.

It is an \$8,000 tax credit for qualified first-time home buyers and a \$6,500 tax credit for repeat, move-up home buyers. And this tax credit that we passed that was law was largely responsible for many of the homes that were purchased in States like mine, Florida, where the housing market has gone kaput. The mortgages were inflated when the housing bubble burst, the property values dropped and you see a number of our States that have been hit so hard, albeit, the entire Nation has been hit hard by the housing bubble bursting.

Well, we tried this home buyer tax credit, and it worked. It was popular in other States, like California, like in Texas. Texas had a more stable housing market, but folks recognized that a good housing market provides a lot of ancillary benefits for the economy. It creates jobs. It generates consumer spending. The studies have shown, looking back on this tax credit we gave for housing, it was in the first quarter of this year, it led to a 6-percent increase in all home sales, and it led to a whopping 42-percent increase in the sale of new homes.

Now by contrast, when that credit expired, the home sales plummeted. Well, what does it mean in real terms to real people and real families? It means jobs. It means jobs selling houses, jobs constructing houses, jobs financing houses—anything associated with a person having one of their most important assets, their home. And then

it means a lot of jobs about making all the things that go inside a house. And that's the kind of boost we need again.

We need again to get this economy moving. Now, since it has been shown to work because it generates home sales and purchases—in States where the real estate industry is a large part of the economy, in States where housing values have dropped, where many homes are underwater in the value of their fair market value now compared to the face amount of their mortgage in many communities that are distressed by foreclosures—and what community has not been hit by that?—what it does is it turns that around and boosts the home sales. That is a part of economic recovery. Now, there are those who are out there who are going to say: Well, it is too expensive. That it doesn't yield good results in certain parts of the country that were not hit with the housing crisis like the rest of us were. And some people will claim: Well, we're coming out of the recession—by their estimation—and it would be better to target our efforts elsewhere.

Mr. President, the recession's not over for many, many Americans. And if something has proven it works, why don't we reinstitute it? It was President Franklin Roosevelt who said, during another time of economic peril, the Great Depression, he said:

Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment.

Mr. President, do we not have the "dark realities of the moment" of what's happening in the State of the Presiding Officer right now, in my State, and many others? Indeed, these are dark economic times, and most every American knows it. Just look to the elections. In almost every exit poll after the election, 60 percent of the voters said the economy was the most important issue facing the Nation—that they were concerned about as they walked into that polling place. Forty percent of those same voters said their families are worse off financially than they were just a few years ago. And 33 percent of them said that someone in their household had lost a job recently. Is that not the "dark realities of the moment"?

So let's take something that worked. And despite the fact that it's costly, let's find an offset. Let's find another source of revenue to pay for approximately the \$15 to \$20 billion that the home buyer tax credit cost before that boosted the sales of homes and started to revive the housing industry and, therefore, revive the fair market values of people's homes. Let's move to quickly bring back this home buyer tax credit. It's worked before, and it will work again.

Mr. President, if I may be recognized again, since no one is waiting to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida is recognized.

DISCLOSURE OF CLASSIFIED
CABLES

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, America's secrets are not what are at risk with the exposure of thousands and thousands of documents of classified cables. America's friends and allies are at risk and, therefore, America's national security is at risk.

When classified cables identify certain people who have helped us from around the world as we advance the interests of the free world, defend our national security, and the safety of all humankind—when those people are exposed, there are a lot of bad people out there who want to get rid of those kind of people. When sources of information—I will dress it up and tell you exactly what it is; it is called intelligence—when sources of intelligence are betrayed by being made public, by the disclosure, indiscriminately, of thousands and thousands of cables that were marked “Top Secret” or marked “Secret,” then what we have done is we have started to shackle our arms behind ourselves in our ability to defend ourselves.

Why do I say that? Well, look at all the recent attempts at a terrorist act. We were able to avert the terrorist striking because we got the information that he was going to strike before he struck. Where did that source of information come? Often that source of information comes from far corners of the globe because we have a relationship with people who are giving us information that we then track down and find that, in fact, it is true and stop the terrorist from doing their dastardly deed upon innocent humans.

Since 2001 and the September 11th bombings and the September 11th crashes of the airliners, over and over again the newspapers of this country have chronicled terrorist plots that have been thwarted for the reasons I have just said. Now along comes someone who, for whatever reasons of being a misfit, wants to disgorge thousands of classified cables that start to betray our sources of information to protect ourselves and protect others—not even necessarily our allies—but other innocent victims in other countries with whom we may not even have a relationship.

This is the height of dishonoring our country and our people and all humankind, and it is the height of traitorous activity. It has to stop. We cannot continue to thwart these terrorist acts if we do not have reliable sources of information in order to disrupt the terrorist plots. Do you know what? The newspapers have chronicled, since the attempt, for example, of blowing up FedEx and UPS—and, by the way, those packages also were carried on commercial airliners with passengers on them—you know what the newspapers have chronicled? They have pointed out how the terrorist organizations are crowing about how little it costs them and how they will find another way in order to do this. As the

newspapers reported, we found out and stopped that plot by long-distance sources of information that came to us. To betray those sources, to now put their lives in jeopardy by the indiscriminate turning over to an organization called WikiLeaks that suddenly puts all of this up on the Web, is the height of irresponsibility, an act against humanity, and it has to be stopped.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TAX POLICY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about our economy and some of the debates and discussions we are engaged in now about tax policy as well as to emphasize the need to be guided during these debates by the two essential priorities on which we must focus. Obviously, those priorities are job creation and continuing economic growth, continuing our recovery. We also must make sure that in the process of doing that, we don't take steps that will increase long-term deficits. So while we debate these many tax issues, I think it is critically important that we don't forget about provisions that both combat poverty and assist those who fall in the lower income brackets.

Last month, the Nation added over 150,000 jobs, which is strong evidence that we are slowly recovering from the devastating impacts of the recent recession. But we are certainly not out of the woods yet, and the Senate must continue to pass legislation that will spur economic growth as well as to focus on ways we can extend certain tax provisions that are set to expire this year.

The debate, unfortunately, has largely focused only on whether to extend the current income tax rates. I am 100 percent in favor of extending income tax rates for middle and lower income tax brackets. Now is not the time to raise taxes on those middle-income families who are still recovering from the recession. Plus, the more money we put in the pockets of those middle-income families means more money is being pumped into the economy through the purchase of goods and services. That is for sure, and I think we will even have consensus on that point alone.

Even as our recovery is slow, there have been a number of bright spots. One bright spot in the recovery is the rate of private sector hiring. In fact, according to the figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more private sector jobs have been created in 2010 when compared to the entire 8 years under President Bush. Private sector jobs decreased by 673,000 in the 8 years of President Bush's Presidency—a decrease of 673,000 private sector jobs. The increase I speak of occurred within this calendar year of 2010—an increase of 874,000 private sector jobs in 2010, and the year, of course, is not over yet.

The tax cuts for upper income folks implemented by President Bush had limited impact on jobs in those years, and the income tax breaks for upper income folks added hundreds of billions to our deficit. However, due to the current condition of the economy and to take every step necessary that we must take to continue the recovery, I believe it is imperative that we maintain certainty. That is what economists have talked to many of us about—to take steps not just to further economic growth and to continue to push forward the recovery but to do that in a way that creates some measure of certainty. Whether a small business owner—hundreds and hundreds of thousands across the country—or a large company, uncertainty and change often tend to make businesses less willing to expand and less willing to hire. Over the last few months, many of our colleagues in the Senate and I have spoken to both business owners and economists to get their views on how we should handle the expiring tax provisions. What I learned, among several lessons from these experts, is that certainty and consistency are needed when the economy is still in a fragile condition.

So I will have more to say as the debate continues about tax cuts, but during these discussions about the income tax cuts and what we should do between now and the end of the year, two important provisions have been barely mentioned: the child tax credit and the marriage penalty under the so-called earned-income tax credit. Both provisions provide necessary tax relief for those in the lower income brackets, and both provisions are necessary to help working families barely getting by for their children during this recession, at a time when poverty levels, unfortunately, are increasing. At this time, this Senate must act to provide tax relief to those who are in desperate need of assistance while they recover from the effects of the recession.

First, the child tax credit. This provides tax relief to working families with children of up to \$1,000 per child. The tax credit was first enacted in 1997 and was expanded last year in the Recovery Act to increase the number of families eligible to receive the credit. As a result of this expansion of the child tax credit, millions of previously ineligible families received critical relief during these tough economic times.

These expanded tax cuts will expire if they are not extended by the end of the year. Here are the numbers from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: 7.6 million children will lose their child tax credit if we don't continue it. An additional 10.5 million children will see those credits reduced or the credits their families receive reduced. In Pennsylvania, half a million children will lose that credit.

To put this in perspective, if you have a family with two children and earning minimum wage, that family