

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

would see its child tax credit reduced by \$825. That is the equivalent of almost 3 weeks of pretax wages for a minimum wage worker—\$825—which would have an adverse impact even on a middle-income family, but to say that about a family earning the minimum wage I think speaks volumes about the impact of not extending the child tax credit. That would be a horrific result for a minimum wage-earning family.

This vital tax relief is necessary to help families struggling to provide their children with basic essentials. If that argument is not convincing enough for folks in the Senate as a reason to extend it, consider that the money that child tax credit results in will be spent immediately and go right back into local economies. It is the same argument we have made on unemployment insurance—that it has an impact on the overall economy.

The child tax credit is not the only poverty-fighting tax provision that is in jeopardy of being reversed. Enhancements to the earned-income tax credit are also set to expire. The so-called EITC—the earned-income tax credit—encourages and rewards work by providing a refundable credit for working people against their payroll and income taxes. Millions of working families with incomes of up to \$48,000 are eligible for the Federal earned-income tax credit.

The Recovery Act we passed in 2009 reduced the so-called marriage penalty in the earned-income tax credit by increasing the income level at which it phases out for married couples. If this expanded tax relief is not extended, 6 million workers will see their earned-income tax credit reduced and 11 million children will be affected. So children get harmed by both. They get harmed by the failure to extend the earned-income tax credit and the failure to extend the child tax credit.

So while the debate has been focused on the extension of tax rates on income, the Senate must not overlook sound tax policy that both fights poverty and spurs economic growth. So I would encourage all Members of the Senate to push for an extension of the provisions that expand eligibility for the child tax credit as well as the earned-income tax credit.

Finally, in addition to those tax provisions, we must not forget that today, November 30, 2010, is the day that federally funded unemployment insurance programs will expire. I encourage other Members of the Senate to not block legislation that will reauthorize unemployment insurance programs through the end of 2011—in other words, unemployment insurance to help the newly unemployed still suffering through and fighting through this recession.

If folks in the Senate block this legislation today—an extension of unemployment insurance—if they block it, I hope they will have an answer for the following question or two: What is your strategy to help these folks get

through this time when they have lost a job through no fault of their own? What are you going to do? What action are you going to take to try to help them?

That is one question. If you don't have an answer to that question, you should also have to answer this question: What are you doing affirmatively to put in place strategies to create jobs? Are you just talking about job creation, are you just talking about helping people, or are you going to take action to extend unemployment insurance or have something else that will help those who are going through this difficult period in their lives—many families who never dreamed they would be in this position—and are you going to do something to help the overall economy to grow and to continue the recovery? Because unemployment insurance does both. It helps the vulnerable get through this recession. It is the right thing to do. It also has a substantial, immeasurable impact on economic growth. All the studies show that. It is irrefutable that it is probably the best thing we can do to create jobs and to continue the recovery—pass a reauthorization of unemployment insurance.

So I encourage my colleagues to not block, but if they block, they need to have an answer to those basic questions.

In Pennsylvania, the unemployment rate now is 8.8 percent. Thank goodness it fell below 9, but 8.8 percent in our State means 560,000 people out of work. In the summer, it went as high as 9.2 percent, so it was approaching 10 percent. We have approximately 560,000 unemployed Pennsylvanians right now. We have to have an answer for those folks. We can't just say: Well, it got a little difficult in Washington, or put some other institutional or policy argument out there without having an answer or an alternative for those who are unemployed.

As have many of the Members of the Senate, I have discussed the impact of the expiration of unemployment insurance with folks in Pennsylvania and others who will be suffering through this. In the course of those discussions, we have had a chance to review what the impact would be on the economy as well as on Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

There is one group we often don't mention. We talk about unemployment, jobless Americans and the economy. We often don't talk about the adverse impact specifically on children. Mr. President, 1 in 10 Pennsylvania children has an unemployed parent, and that is true across the country—roughly 1 in 10 in many States.

That translates to 265,000 children under the age of 18 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who are directly impacted by unemployment—265,300 children who are affected just by unemployment. So as we address ways to improve the economic outlook

in our country and discuss the tax provisions, we must recognize the impact the economy has on our children.

I will end with a line from the Scriptures that says that “a faithful friend is a sturdy shelter.” It goes on to talk about how important having a faithful friend in life is. There are a lot of folks, politicians especially, who talk non-stop about helping children and the importance of doing that and the priority placed on our children and the priority to protect our children from harm and to help them especially in a recession. You have to do more than talk.

If you consider yourself a friend of children, you would support an extension of the child tax credit. You would support other provisions, such as unemployment insurance, that help families such as those families who have 265,000 children who are affected by unemployment in Pennsylvania. If you are going to say you are a faithful friend and want to be a sturdy shelter for children, what are you going to do about it?

The question we must ask ourselves, among many, is: Will the Senate be a faithful friend to children, not just by talk and rhetoric but by actions, taking steps to help children get through this recession, helping their families and also spur and continue economic growth and recovery?

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

COMMENDING RETIRING SENATORS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, 16 Senators will retire this year. There is also a pretty big turnover in this body, but that is a lot of Senators at once. We are losing an enormous amount of talent, but, of course, we are gaining a lot of talent with the new Senators.

I wish to show my respect for those who have served, which I will do in a summary fashion because we are talking about 16 individuals with very complex and distinguished backgrounds.

One might ask, what are the characteristics of a Senator? There are a lot of different answers to that, depending on your background and attitude toward politics and government, I suppose. I have always thought that one characteristic of almost every Member of the Senate is that he or she probably was a first grader sitting in the front row, hand in the air waiting to be recognized. This is an eager bunch or you would not have gotten here.

Second, it is a group of risk-takers. Most people who end up in the Senate get here because a lot of other people who wanted to be Senators were standing around waiting for the right time to run. A lot of people who were elected to the Senate seemed to have no chance of winning at the time they decided to run, but the voters decided differently, and here they are.

A third characteristic of Senators is that we are almost all professional and