

the Bush tax cuts for the richest Americans that will cost us almost \$1 trillion. They talk about helping the economy. But economists across the board agree that unemployment insurance programs are one of the best ways to provide a much needed boost. So for those Republicans it is not about the deficit, it is not about what is best for the economy, it is certainly not about good policy, it is about politics, plain and simple.

I am going to keep fighting to maintain these emergency unemployment compensation benefits through next year for Judy Curtis's family, for thousands of families like hers across Washington State, and for millions in America. These programs were not meant to continue indefinitely. But until our economy gets back on track, it would be devastating to cut those families off from this critical lifeline now.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant editor of the Daily Digest proceeded to call the roll.

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 I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I come to the floor to share letters from Ohioans from all corners of my State, letters mostly from people who have lost their jobs and depend on something called unemployment insurance. It is insurance, not welfare, not giveaways. People work at a business. Their employer pays into the unemployment insurance fund. Obviously, it is money the employee does not get as income, so we could say it either way: the employee pays or the employer pays. Either way it is insurance. They pay into a fund. When someone loses their job, they get assistance from the fund. This is why it works so well.

When the unemployment rate is above a certain level, a relatively high unemployment rate, we always have extended and maintained unemployment insurance benefits for those workers who have lost jobs. We do that for two reasons: One, because it is the right thing to do if someone loses their job. Whether it is in Boulder in the State of the Presiding Officer or in Galion, OH, it is the humanitarian thing to do. That worker who has lost their job can at least pay most of their bills then, at least stay in the apartment or house and pay the mortgage, pay the rent, pay for food, take care of the kids. They wouldn't be able to without the unemployment insurance monthly payments.

The second reason we do it is, as one of JOHN McCAIN's chief economic advisers said repeatedly, a dollar in unemployment benefits is about the best stimulus for the economy one could have. When we give a tax cut to a millionaire, as most of my Republican colleagues want to do, if we give \$10,000 to a millionaire, they will likely not spend it. They have already spent their money on what they want because they have more than enough to do that. So a tax cut doesn't mean much to them. But an unemployment check means that an unemployed worker will spend that money in the community, at the grocery store, buying shoes for the kids, paying the property tax, paying for their rent and gas bill, paying for gas in the car to go around looking for jobs. The money is recirculated. It is a good economic stimulus and the right thing to do for the worker who has lost their job. That is why the Presiding Officer and others have fought so hard to make sure those benefits are there. It is not welfare; it is insurance.

In spite of what some conservative politicians like to suggest, that it is people sitting around who don't want to work, almost everybody I talked to—whether it was in Conneaut or Middleton or Sidney or Portsmouth—who lost a job wants to go back to work. Unemployment compensation is never as much as the person is making on the job. That is under a formula. That is why they want to go back to work. Plus these are hard-working people who understand that they need to keep looking for a job.

For every job out there, there are roughly five people seeking a job. That is a national figure. But in Ohio, it is no better. That is why I am going to share these letters.

I will start with Timothy from Fairfield. That is a prosperous suburban Cincinnati community in Butler County in southwest Ohio. It happens everywhere, not just the inner city, not just rural Appalachia. It is not just small towns or medium-size cities. It is generally pretty affluent suburbs.

He writes:

Unemployment extensions end in about two weeks and once again my family worries about what the future will bring.

The last delay made us unable to pay many bills on time and we still have not fully recovered.

If another delay happens we will certainly be put in such a hole that I don't see us getting out of.

Not to mention it's the holiday season and I really don't know what I would tell my 4 and 7 year old if Christmas wasn't as it has been in the past.

I am in the manufacturing field. I worked as an inspector and quality engineer.

This next week will be my first of my final 20 weeks of Ohio emergency unemployment. I search for openings in quality inspectors and quality engineers within a 50 mile radius of our town.

How is he going to afford gas if his unemployment extension runs out?

I found zero results. I have been applying for retail jobs, janitorial jobs, and maintenance jobs.

If I even get to interview the answer is the same. You are way overqualified for this job.

I was told that the new sporting goods store had over 3,000 applicants.

Are both sides willing to do what needs to be done to avoid another delay? I don't know what we will do if the extension is not passed in time.

It is unbelievable that my conservative colleagues are willing to give tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires but are unwilling to maintain unemployment benefits for people such as Timothy. When one thinks about that, it is also the anxiety that somebody like Tim feels about his children, about his house, about his being able to provide what he needs during the Christmas season or any other season. So many people in this country have to wait until the Republicans drop their filibuster in order for us to maintain these benefits. That is pretty unconscionable.

Kelly from Summit County, the Akron area in northeast Ohio, writes:

Please help get the unemployment extension passed during this session.

I am about to exhaust my benefits in three weeks. Everyday I look for employment, but to no avail.

My mortgage company leaves no room for late or missing payments.

I don't need the money for Christmas—I need it to pay my bills and my mortgage.

There will be no Christmas this year, especially when I begin to get behind on payments.

Kelly says what so many are saying in letters to our office, that this is essential. Getting this relatively meager unemployment assistance, not a lot of money but enough to at least pay her rent—although I don't know if Kelly is male or female—but to pay the rent, not Christmas presents, nothing elaborate, not even Christmas dinner but to just pay the rent.

Richard from Summit County says:

I am writing to share the reality of my situation that I'm sure millions are also experiencing. Today I filed my final claim for unemployment. This is the moment that made me lay awake at night. The reality is at our home there will be no Thanksgiving and no Christmas this year. I hear carols being played, I see ads for Christmas sales. It makes me depressed like never before. I feel the gifts and celebrations are meant for other people—the "haves." No more money for my diabetes medicine, dental checkups, eye drops for glaucoma. Never have I felt like throwing in the towel before now.

I just wish my colleagues would talk to people like Richard: When I hear carols being played for Christmas sales, it makes me depressed like never before. I feel the gifts and celebrations are meant for other people. No more money for my diabetes meds, no more dental checkups, no more eye drops for glaucoma.

Unemployment benefits are not going to make him comfortable or rich, but it will help him get through these rough times. Instead, to make a political point, my colleagues are saying we are not going to maintain unemployment benefits.

The last one I will read is from Jacqueline from Cuyahoga County in the Cleveland area:

I have been an unemployed human resources professional for a year and a half. Even after having applied for over 170 jobs, I am still very active in my job search.

These are not people sitting around cashing their checks. She is still very active in her job search.

I go to at least 2 networking events/meetings per week and I keep a positive attitude in spite of my situation. Yes, I have applied for jobs in other fields or professions which use similar and transferable skills. I get no response. I have worked with recruiters and head hunters, online networks, and have appealed to friends and family members to look for opportunities. I have worked full-time since I was 16 years old, even through college. At age 45 and as an educated professional with so much to offer an organization, I still want to work for many more years.

She has worked since she was 16. She is now 45. She has worked twice as long as almost the age of these pages who sit in front of us. She has worked for 29 years. She is not a deadbeat. She doesn't want to sit around and collect unemployment. She wants a job. As I said, there are five people pursuing every job out there.

Without unemployment benefits, my family would have lost our home by now. I am begging you to fight to extend unemployment benefits until more companies start hiring. Please don't let 15 million Americans have to worry about feeding their families this winter. Please urge your colleagues to pass an unemployment benefit extension before December 1.

December 1 is approaching. We still can't get our Republican colleagues—it is pretty unbelievable. We have been through this for the third time, I believe, in the last year or so where we have begged and cajoled and pleaded and asked and done whatever we can to get our colleagues to say yes, to not filibuster, to get our colleagues to say yes, to get the supermajority, the 60 votes we need to extend the unemployment benefits.

There is a lot of fear out there. Whether it is in Denver or Cleveland, whether it is in Trinidad or Mansfield, there is all kinds of anxiety and fear and anguish out there. We could do something in this body to lessen it for our fellow Americans.

I ask my colleagues to move forward in maintaining unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans for whom the Christmas season, the holiday season will not be very happy this year.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

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.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

CAMPAIGN TO STOP BULLYING

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Over the last few months, our Nation has mourned the loss of several lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender teenagers driven to suicide because of hateful and ignorant bullying and harassment. These tragic circumstances brought families, friends, and concerned citizens together through vigils on public squares in communities all over this country and on college campuses throughout the Nation. Together, millions of fellow Americans have drawn attention to intolerance and violence that LGBT Americans face each day. Together, we can ensure all LGBT Americans that life will get better for them.

As a father, I cannot bear to imagine the unspeakable pain endured by the parents of those teenagers who tragically took their own lives. No parent should have to bury a child. No child should ever feel so hopeless and so forgotten and so alone and so isolated that suicide seems like their only escape. But the rash of highly publicized suicides of LGBT students not only highlights the national epidemic of bullying these students face, it also reminds us that we all as adults, as clergy, as educators, or as peers of these students—we all have a role to play in preventing discrimination.

Bullies target the vulnerable and subject them to cruelty through taunts in the classroom or on the Internet, through chants on the playing field or physical abuse in the neighborhood. Prejudices based on religion or race or disability or sexual orientation or gender or physical or intellectual differences too often translate into physical torment and isolation and abuse against others.

LGBT youth, in particular, are frequently targeted by bullies. Public surveys indicate that 80 percent of LGBT students report regular harassment by fellow students—a rate three times that of heterosexual teens, three times the rate of their heterosexual peers. Seventy-five percent of high school students routinely hear homophobic remarks in school, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. Without a safe space to speak openly with a caring adult or a like-minded peer, victims are left to question their self-worth.

On top of the self-doubt and insecurity that all young people feel already regardless of gender or race or sexual orientation—we have all been through that certainly as young teenagers and older teenagers, too, for that matter, but add to that the kind of insecurities that are put on them by bullying tactics, by so many people spouting homophobic remarks.

Too many young gay men and women, boys and girls, are forced into secrecy about who they are rather than affirming the person they should proudly be.

A brave young Ohioan named Nicholas sent me a letter detailing an attack by a schoolyard bully. Here is what Nicholas wrote:

On September 18th, 2009 I was attacked by a student at my school for being gay. This student beat me in the head with a hammer three times. He chased me down so he could get the last two hits. The student attacked me for being gay. I have no way of using this attack to promote gay rights, to promote gay equality, but you do. And you could do this for me. I need your help more than anything. No one deserves to go through what I went through.

My message to Nicholas and to all LGBT Americans is this: You are not alone. Life will get better. You can find the love and acceptance you deserve, and you will find the love and acceptance you deserve, free from fear and hate. You will realize your full potential every bit as much as anyone else because things are changing in this country.

There is no acceptable justification for the violence experienced by Nicholas or the physical and emotional mistreatment of LGBT students in our schools and in our communities. That is why the Senate must take crucial steps to ensure that schools are safe places for learning, safe places for students, and not breeding grounds for bullying.

First, we must pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act which would help schools implement LGBT-inclusive programming to combat bullying and harassment. Second, we must pass the Student Nondiscrimination Act which would bar schools which receive public money from implementing programs that discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Legislation alone, of course, will not eradicate or put an end to bullying, but we also know what legislation did for women, for children, for civil rights. Attitudes change over time. Legislation helps accelerate that change. That is why those two pieces of legislation matter. They will be major steps toward ensuring safety and equal treatment for all students in our school systems.

Parents and teachers also have a special responsibility to help LGBT youth confront the bullying they face at school. They, too, should ensure that every student knows she is valued, knows he is valued, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

LGBT community centers or national organizations such as the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network are valuable resources for students, parents, and educators.

I remember several years ago an event where students sat together as part of a gay/straight alliance at a high school in western Cuyahoga County. There were 10 students at 2 different tables, 5 gay students, 5 straight students, all supporting one another, understanding each other and accepting their differences. They can still care about one another, and they can protect them, in many cases, from some of the bullying that might have befallen some of them.

To our own LGBT students who are either forced to live a lie or face hostility for simply living their lives, all