

job through no fault of their own, replacing roughly half of an individual's lost earnings. Typically, unemployed workers can receive up to 26 weeks of benefits, as long as they continue to search for work. In an economy with normal labor demand, one would expect most unemployed workers to find a job within this time frame. However, in December 2007 the United States began to slide into a deep recession. By October 2009, the unemployment rate was 10.1 percent, and there were more than 6 jobs seekers for every job opening, compared to just 1.5 prior to the recession.

Recognizing that unemployed workers would have a significantly harder time finding jobs, Congress created Emergency Unemployment Compensation 2008 (EUC) in June of that year. This swift action put unemployment benefits in place much earlier than has been done in previous recessions—almost one year before GDP stopped declining. These early efforts by Congress resulted in UI playing a greater role in stabilizing the economy, as suggested in a recent Department of Labor report.

As the labor market worsened, Congress further extended and expanded the program, particularly for unemployed workers in the hardest-hit states. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress provided for 100 percent federal funding of Extended Benefits (EB), a program usually funded jointly by the state and federal governments. Individuals are eligible for EB once they exhaust their EUC benefits if their state meets certain unemployment-based triggers. All told, an unemployed worker could receive up to 99 weeks of coverage in those states with the highest rates of unemployment. (See the Appendix for more detail on these programs.)

Importantly, the current tiered structure of EUC and EB allows for a natural phasing down of coverage as economic conditions improve. Many of the eligible weeks of benefits are determined at the state level by thresholds based on states' unemployment rates; the maximum length of coverage provided by these federal programs is shorter in states with better economies. Beyond this natural phase down, however, the legislation authorizing these programs began to expire on November 30, 2010 and the millions of Americans receiving coverage through these programs have already begun losing benefits.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3981

Mr. CASEY. So with that, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 3981, a bill to provide for a temporary extension of unemployment insurance provisions; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ENSIGN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, because the Republicans want to extend unemployment benefits without increasing the deficits, would the Senator agree to include an amendment proposed by Senator BROWN that would offset the cost of the bill with unspent Federal funds, the text of which is at the desk?

Mr. CASEY. I would not. I object to that for the simple reason that the construction of that amendment in-

volves dollars already allocated to Federal programs across the board. Although the money has not been spent yet, it has been allocated. If there is a concern, as there seems to be—and I would categorize it as an alleged concern—about the deficit, there doesn't seem to be the same concern about running up the deficit not by billions but by hundreds of billions to extend tax cuts to Americans above the \$250,000 income tax bracket. So if there is that concern about the deficits, I wish that logic and concern was applied to the tax cut debate.

Mr. ENSIGN. Further reserving the right to object, first of all, I would love to offset the tax cuts with spending reductions in areas across the board because I think the deficit is a problem. Because the Senator from Pennsylvania just wants to increase the deficit with unemployment benefits, without offsetting it, without spending cuts, I am forced to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CASEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. ENSIGN pertaining to the introduction of S. 4004 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

REVISIONIST FISCAL HISTORY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, since yesterday, we have witnessed in this Chamber the resumption of a set of tired and worn out taking points that the Democratic side drags out whenever they are forced to finally get around to discussing tax policy.

Well, once again beating the same dead horse, the other side has attempted to go back in time again and talk about fiscal history. Earlier this week, there has been a lot of revision or perhaps editing of recent budget history. I expect more of it in the future days.

The revisionist history basically boils down to two conclusions. First, that all of the "good" fiscal history of the 1990s was derived from a partisan tax increase bill in 1993, and, two, that all the bad fiscal history of this decade to date is attributable to bipartisan tax relief plans.

Not surprisingly, nearly all of the revisionists who spoke generally oppose tax relief and support spending increases. The same crew generally supports spending increases and opposes spending cuts.

For this debate, it is important to be aware of some key facts. The stimulus bill passed by the Senate, with interest included, increased the deficit by over \$1 trillion. The stimulus bill was a heavy stew of spending increases and refundable tax credits seasoned with small pieces of tax relief.

The bill passed by the Senate had new temporary spending that, if made

permanent, will burden future budget deficits by over \$2.5 trillion. Now, that is not this Senate Republican speaking; it is the official congressional scorekeeper, the Congressional Budget Office. In fact, the deficit effects of the stimulus bill passed within a short time after the Democrats assumed full control of the Federal Government roughly exceeded the deficit impact of 8 years of bipartisan tax relief. You can see that very clearly right here.

The tax relief over here, and the stimulus bill here—all of this occurred in an environment where the automatic economic stabilizers, thankfully, kicked in to help the most unfortunate in America with unemployment insurance, increased amounts of food stamps, and other benefits.

That antirecessionary spending, together with lower tax receipts and the bailout activities, set a fiscal table of a deficit of \$1.4 trillion. That was the highest deficit as a percentage of the economy in post-World War II history. You can see that right here.

From the perspective of those on the Republican side, this debate seems to be a strategy to divert, through a twisted blame game, from the facts before us. How is the history a history of revision? I would like to take each conclusion one by one.

The first conclusion is that all of the good fiscal history was derived from the 1993 tax increases. To test that assertion, all you have to do is take a look at data from the Clinton administration. The much ballyhooed 1993 partisan tax increase accounts for 13 percent of the deficit reduction in the 1990s, 13 percent. That 13-percent figure was calculated by the Clinton administration Office of Management and Budget.

The biggest source of deficit reduction, 35 percent, came from a reduction in defense spending. Of course, that fiscal benefit originated from President Reagan's stare-down of the Communist regime in Russia. The same folks on that side who opposed President Reagan's defense build-up somehow seem to take credit for the fiscal benefit of the peace dividend.

The next biggest source of the deficit reduction, 32 percent, came from other revenue. Basically this was the fiscal benefit from the pro-growth policies such as the bipartisan capital gains tax cuts of 1997 and the free trade agreements that President Clinton, with Republican votes, got passed.

The savings from the policies I pointed out translated to interest savings. Interest savings account for 15 percent of the deficit reduction. Now, for all of the chest thumping about the 1990s, the chest thumpers who pushed for big social spending, did not bring much to the deficit reduction tables in the 1990s. Their contribution was this, 5 percent.

What is more, the fiscal revision historians in this body tend to forget who the players were. They are correct that there was a Democratic President in

the White House, but they conveniently forget that Republicans controlled the Congress for the period where the deficit came down and eventually turned into a surplus.

They tend to forget they fought the principle of a balanced budget that was the centerpiece of Republican fiscal policy.

Remember, the government shut-downs of late 1995? Remember what that was all about? It was about a plan to balance the budget.

We are consistently reminded of the political price paid by the other side for the record tax increases they put into law in 1993. Republicans played a political price for forcing the balanced budget issue in 1996. But as we found out in 1997, President Clinton agreed. Recall as well all through the 1990s what the year-end battles were about.

On one side, congressional Democrats and the Clinton administration pushed for more spending. On the other side, congressional Republicans were pushing for tax relief. In the end, both sides compromised. That is the real fiscal history of the 1990s.

Now, let's turn to the other conclusion of the revision by fiscal historians. That conclusion is that in this decade all fiscal problems are attributable to the widespread tax relief enacted in the years 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2006.

In 2001, President Bush came into office. He inherited an economy that was careening downhill. Investments started to go flat in 2000. The tech-fueled stock market bubble was bursting. After that came the economic shocks of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Add in the corporate scandals to that economic environment, and it is true that in the fiscal year 2001, as it came to a close, the projected surpluses turned to a deficit.

But it is wrong to attribute the entire deficit occurring during this period to the bipartisan tax relief. Because, according to the CBO, the bipartisan tax relief is responsible for only 25 percent of the deficit change, while 44 percent is attributable to higher spending and 31 percent to economic and technical changes.

In just the right time, the 2001 tax relief plan kicked in. As the tax relief hits its full force in 2003, the deficits grew smaller. This pattern continued for 4 more years through 2007. If my comments were meant to be partisan shots, I could say this favorable fiscal path from 2003 to 2007 was the only period, aside from 6 months in 2001, where Republicans controlled the White House and the Congress.

But unlike the fiscal history revisionists, I am not trying to make a partisan point; I am just trying to point out a few fiscal facts. There is also data that compares the tax receipts for 4 years after the much ballyhooed 1993 tax increase and the 4-year period after the 2003 tax cuts.

I have a chart here that will track those trends. In 1993, the Clinton tax increases, the blue line, brought in

more revenue as compared to the 2003 tax cuts. That trend reversed as both policies moved along in years. Over the first few years, the extra revenue went up over time relative to the flat line of the 1993 tax increases.

So let's get the fiscal history right. The pro-growth tax and trade policies of the 1990s, along with the peace dividend, had a lot more to do with the deficit reduction in the 1990s than the 1993 tax increases.

In this decade, deficits went down after the tax relief plans were put in full effect. No economist I am aware of would link the technical bursting of the housing bubble with the bipartisan tax relief plans of 2001 and 2003. Likewise, I know of no economic research that concludes that the bipartisan tax relief of 2001 and 2003 caused the financial meltdown of September and October 2008.

I have another chart that shows what the President inherited from the Democratic Congress and a Republican President. As I said, from the period 2003 through 2007, after the bipartisan tax relief program was in full effect, the general pattern was this: revenues went up, deficits went down.

One major point that needs to be said right here is to state where the government gets the money it spends. Basically I am asking, from where do taxes come? I would have thought this would have been perfectly obvious to most people, but I may have been wrong. Taxes come from taxpayers. I say this because we have heard tax relief for certain individuals referred to as the word "bonus." A search of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for the Senate on December 1, 2010, shows that the word "bonus" was said nearly 50 times, the implication being that by extending tax relief for all Americans we are giving some people a bonus that other people are paying for.

Let me try to simplify this for my colleagues who are having trouble understanding. There is no proposal to cut taxes for anyone before this body. The question is, Instead, are we going to allow taxes to go up or are we going to prevent a tax increase? If we prevent taxes for everyone from going up, we are letting taxpayers keep more of their own money that they have earned and worked hard for. No one is proposing a bonus or a gift to anyone. The question is, Do we want taxpayers to have more or less of their own money?

My colleagues on the other side have been especially incensed by what they consistently refer to as "tax cuts for the rich" and seem to believe tax relief for everyone is responsible for our disastrous budget situation. However, I think nearly everyone serving in the Chamber and certainly the President and House and Senate leadership support extending around 80 percent of that tax relief. If those on the other side are serious in their pleas that taxes must be increased in the name of fiscal responsibility, how can they claim 80 percent of the tax relief is ab-

solutely necessary and that 20 percent of the tax relief is absolutely wrong? This chart, drawn up from Congressional Budget Office data, should give more insight into the two groups the other side is talking about. The orange line measures the effective tax rate paid by the top 5 percent of taxpayers. By the way, this is where the small business owners' tax hit occurs. This group represents those tax-paying families with incomes over \$250,000. Under the Democratic leadership's preferred tax policy, this line will go back up to where it was in the year 2000. Republicans would prefer to prevent this tax increase, and we have shown it falls primarily on the backs of small business.

The main point this chart shows, though, is that tax relief undertaken during the last administration benefited all taxpayers, and characterizing it as tax cuts for the rich is simply not accurate. Of course, I wish to put our country on a path to fiscal responsibility, but I do not believe higher taxes will lead us to that path. Rather, we need to carefully examine how we spend the money we already collect.

This debate is about one fundamental question. Who does the money you, the taxpayer, have worked hard to get belong to? Does it belong to the citizens who earn it or does it belong to the government? Is whatever the taxpayer is left with an allowance, with the balance to be spent by a government that knows best? I think most people would answer my last two questions with a strong resounding no. As we continue to discuss pressing tax matters in Congress, we need to keep these fundamental and simple truths in mind. We need to stop taxes from increasing for all Americans. It is fundamental, after all the years I have served in the Senate, that increasing taxes \$1 does not go to the bottom line and bring the deficit down.

Through three or four different occasions during the years I have served in the Senate, we have had propositions, some of them even bipartisan, that we increase taxes by \$1 and somehow we will decrease expenditures by \$3 and, in the process, we are all going to win and the deficit is going to go down. But what we forget is how the mechanics of legislative bodies work. You increase taxes for a long period of time, but each year expenditures are reviewed, and somehow that 3-for-1 rule does not seem to hold on the expenditure side. They don't go down. They creep up, creep up, and creep up. So in the final analysis, it is kind of averaged out that for every \$1 we bring in in increased taxes, it is a license to spend \$1.15.

Some studies would say it is even much higher than that and not just one proposition like that but several propositions like that. That is how it has ended up. I don't like to increase taxes, but if there was ever a time I could increase taxes and knew that went to the bottom line and brought the deficit down \$1, it might be a proposition I

could buy into. But the practice of legislative bodies, particularly the Congress of the United States, increasing taxes \$1 is a license to spend more. It is a ratchet effect. I am very suspicious of those propositions. I think my colleagues see that raising taxes has not done anything to bring the budget deficit down.

I ask our colleagues, in these last few weeks of this Congress, to keep those historical facts in mind so we don't get hoodwinked into doing things that don't end up reducing the deficit. Even at a time when it sounds like it will reduce the deficit and makes sense, the common sense we ought to remind each other of is it doesn't work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the upcoming amendments and debate we will have on the tax issue. Let me say a few things. First, we are in a very tough economic situation. We have a large number of unemployed people, and even people who have been employed over the last decade, for the middle class, their incomes have not gone up. Their buying power has not gone up. This is the first decade that middle-class incomes have not increased.

Second, the economy, if we look at statistics from 2000 to 2010, even with the recession, has done pretty well. But almost all the income and all the wealth has agglomerated to the top 1 percent and top 10 percent. That means the people at the highest end did very well, while everybody else did not. I have nothing against them. In fact, I think they are great. They are part of the American dream. To say they have gotten most of the wealth, some of my colleagues bring up the false issue of class warfare. It is not class warfare. It is a fact we have to deal with, just like saying middle-class incomes have not gone up enough. That is not class warfare either. Those are just facts.

Then there is the third issue; that when we began the decade in 2001 there was a surplus of \$300 billion left by Bill Clinton. Now, of course, we have a huge deficit. We did when Barack Obama took office, and because of the stimulus it is greater. But the No. 1 reason was the tax cuts, mainly agglomerated to the wealthy, passed by President George Bush and a Senate and House led by Republicans.

Issue 4, when the tax rates were higher—Bill Clinton had raised them—we all know job growth in the 1990s far exceeded job growth in this decade.

So put all that together, and it makes a pretty strong point that the middle class needs relief, No. 1; that the country must overcome the deficit problems we face, No. 2; and No. 3, that the highest income people are doing great.

So what would be the proper solution to that when we have a tax bill coming before us? It is pretty logical. It is pretty obvious. We should actually

make sure the middle class keeps their taxes low. They are the ones whose incomes have suffered. They are the ones who spend it when they get a check because they don't have much money. They are the ones who need the relief both for themselves and in their personal and family situations and for the economy. But to give huge amounts of tax breaks to the very wealthy doesn't make any sense. Why? Because, first, they are doing great. God bless them; second, because they don't spend it. They are not going to go out to the supermarket or the department store Christmas shopping because they know they are getting a little bit of a tax break; they have plenty of money. And third, because even most of them would probably admit they did fine when the rate was a little higher on them. It is not going to affect their business and spending decisions very much, if at all.

The logical solution is to give the middle class the tax break and say to the upper income: Your money should go to deficit reduction. That is what we will vote on in the next few days on the floor. Some would prefer that the level be 250, that the tax cuts should go to all those below 250. I know my colleague from Iowa feels that way. He will speak after me. I have been willing to have the rates go up to 1 million. I think having a rate for the very highest income people, which we always used to have, restoring that makes a great deal of sense because that is where the wealth is agglomerating. It is no longer people in the top 10 percent who do the best. It is people in the top 1 percent who do the best, far and away. On that vote, we will see where people stand.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle like to make it seem as if a tax cut for someone making \$50,000 is the same as a tax cut for someone making \$5 million. They say: Tax cuts for everybody. Don't raise taxes on anybody. But it is not the truth. What we are here to do is actually pull away the veil. It seems the No. 1 motivation of too many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle is to give a tax break to the wealthiest among us, which may make political sense. I don't know. It may for them. It sure doesn't make economic sense. It doesn't make fairness sense. It doesn't make sense from the point of view of getting the economy going.

I want the American public, over the next few days, as we debate taxes, to listen. Ask yourself: Do you think someone making \$10 million should get a huge tax break? Do you think Warren Buffett or Bill Gates should get a tax break that is more than the income of thousands and thousands and thousands of middle-class people? If you believe no, tell your Senator.

Do you believe the deficit is a serious problem and giving \$300 billion to \$400 billion to people who make over \$1 million instead of putting that money into the deficit makes sense? If you do not, call your Senator and tell him no. Do

you think it is at all fair to say that to extend unemployment benefits for hard-working people who are looking every day for jobs, that that has to be paid for but tax breaks to the wealthiest among us do not have to be? If you think that does not make any sense, tell your Senator, tell him or her no.

I know we have a very powerful media group on the hard right, and they are going to try to get on the radio and get on the television and convince the average middle-class person that Democrats want to take away their tax cut and Republicans want to give it to them. But nothing could be further from the truth. We have been the ones focused on the middle class, and they have been the ones focused on the wealthy.

We are not willing to hold middle-class tax cuts hostage until there is a tax cut for the wealthiest among us. It is time for some clarity. If all my colleagues on the other side of the aisle vote for a tax break for those whose annual income is above \$1 million, unpaid for, I do not want to hear about deficit reduction when it comes to programs for transportation or education or health or the military from them ever again.

They may believe lowering taxes on everybody is a good thing. That is an ideology I do not agree with at this point in time. But they cannot claim deficit reduction is a goal when they will increase the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars without it being paid for to give tax breaks to the very few wealthy families here in America.

As for the argument that those tax breaks are important to create jobs, no economist believes that. We are talking about the personal income tax rate, not the corporate rate. We are talking about people who, when they had a higher rate, did very well. We are talking about job growth in the last decade among the slowest we have had in a very long time under those low tax rates, whether they were times of economic growth or economic decline. There is virtually no good argument to give huge tax breaks to the very wealthy at a time when our deficit is as large as it is. There is a very good argument to give those same tax breaks, on a percentage basis, of course, to the middle class.

So to the American people, please watch the floor tonight, tomorrow, over the next several days. Figure out who is on your side. Figure out who is being fiscally responsible. Figure out who wants to help the average middle-class person and at the same time get a hold on our deficit.

Again, I repeat, I respect and salute those who have made a lot of money on their own and are very wealthy. God bless them. They are part of the American dream. But the American dream does not say that at a time of need, at a time when deficits are severe, that because you have made all that money you should get a more huge tax break than everybody else.

So this debate is going to be an interesting one. I think it is going to set the tone for what we do over the next 2 years. Believe me, we will be talking about the millionaires' tax break—who voted for it and who voted against it—not just today and not just tomorrow but over the next 2 years. It is a very important issue and one we cannot let rest for the good of the middle class, for the good of deficit reduction, for the good of the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I listened with great attention to the speech just given by my friend from New York. Senator SCHUMER is right on target when he is talking about: Whom are we fighting for? What are we in the Senate for? What are we here to do? Whom are we fighting for?

I have often said the one thing about the very wealthy in our country, they are pretty good at taking care of themselves. Obviously, they would not be rich if they were not. But what about the people who do not have much? Who is fighting for them? This is what I wish to spend some time talking about; that is, the unemployed in this country.

Last week we went home for Thanksgiving. I hope everyone had a good time with their families. Now we are looking at the upcoming holidays with anticipation, as we do every year, to be with our families, go out and buy some presents and exchange presents—kids, grandkids, a festive time.

But what about all those people who are out of work and have no money, who right now are being cut off from the only lifeline they have, unemployment insurance benefits—losing them day after day because they ended 2 days ago. By the time Christmas rolls around, somewhere close to 2 million Americans not only will be out of a job but will have no source of income whatsoever, facing another winter season celebrating the holidays with nothing.

I had a newspaper headline I showed the other day that said: "Luxury spending is back in fashion"—about how much money was being spent on jewels and fancy wristwatches and high-end types of things. Then, right under, in small print, it said: However, for millions of Americans they are not shopping anywhere because they are out of work.

The two faces of America—is that what we want this country to be, a few who can spend on lavish, jewel-encrusted watches, buying \$2,500 cashmere scarves, as I just read about the other day, and everybody else sort of getting in the soup line? We are a better country than that.

That is what I wanted to talk about: reauthorizing the emergency unemployment insurance program. But I, first of all, listened to my friend and colleague from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, talk about taxes. I did not hear

the whole speech, but I heard him say raising taxes never reduces the deficit or reduces the debt. I do not know which he said—either the debt or the deficit.

Well, I hate to disagree with my friend, but in 1993, when we enacted the Clinton economic proposal, it included increasing taxes in 1993. Oh, I remember the Senator from Texas, Mr. Phil Gramm, an economist, got up and said: Oh, this is going to cause a depression. This will be the worst thing that ever happened to this country. We are going to rue the day we ever did this. Well, we passed it. Of course, it did not get one Republican vote, and we did raise some taxes in 1993.

What happened, then, for the next 7, 8 years? We had unprecedented growth in this country. Quite frankly, we did balance the budget by 2000. Not only did we balance it, we had a surplus, and we had a surplus going into 2001. That is when George Bush came to the Presidency and said: Oh, we have this big surplus. Alan Greenspan was warning us we had too much of a surplus and it might not be wise to pay down the debt. We were on course to pay down the national debt. Then the Bush administration pushed through some tax cuts, for which they said: Oh, we are just going to do it temporarily, you see, just until 2010. We will keep them until 2010, and then we will have to revisit it or we will go back to what we had before in 2001.

They made that deal. I did not vote for it. I did not think we should cut taxes that time. I thought we should pay off the national debt. That would have strengthened our economy more than anything. But, no, the Bush administration, the Republicans who controlled the House and the Senate, said they wanted to cut the taxes. Most of the taxes that were cut, as my friend from New York said, were for the very wealthy.

What happened? Did we have a lot of job growth? Not a bit. Not a bit. Not only did we not get job growth, the deficit skyrocketed. So I do not want to hear any exhortations from that side of the aisle about how raising taxes has never reduced the deficit or the debt. We did under Bill Clinton. The proof is there. We had a surplus. But they wanted the tax breaks to give to the wealthy.

Lastly, my friend from New York talked about being held hostage. There has been a lot of talk about middle-income Americans getting a tax break. But I ask—and I keep asking—who are middle-income Americans? Who are they? Well, I keep hearing it is those earning \$250,000 a year or below. Mr. President, \$250,000 a year? My friends, if you are making \$250,000 a year, you are in the top 5 percent of the income earners in America. That is right. If you make \$250,000 a year, 95 percent of the American people make less than you do. So is that middle class? I do not think so.

To me, in the middle class are people who are making \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000,

\$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000, \$90,000 a year. That is the broad middle class of America. A lot of people in America are living on \$40,000 a year. It might be hard for some people to think about that, but that is true. They do not take fancy trips. They do not have fancy cars. They do not go to fancy restaurants. They do not wear suits and ties every day. But they are working, and a lot of them are working at jobs that are important to our society.

They may be nurses aides. They may be taking care of our elderly in a nursing home or in assisted living. They may be our childcare workers taking care of our children. They could be working in fast food places. They are making \$35,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 a year, and that is it. That is the middle class of America. What are we doing for them? What are we doing for that middle class?

So every time I hear about that \$250,000 is the middle class, I am thinking: Wait a second. You are talking about the top 5 percent in America. If you want to talk about the broad middle class, you have to start talking about people making less than \$100,000 a year. What are we doing for them?

Well, it seems to me, if we are going to have some tax breaks and stuff, we have to think about this group. In that group—in that group—of the broad middle class is the army of the unemployed. That is where the unemployed are. The unemployed are not on Wall Street. They got their bailouts. They are getting million-dollar bonuses this year, and my friends on the Republican side want to extend the tax breaks so not only do they get their million-dollar bonuses, they will not have to pay their fair share of taxes on them either, not to mention, for some of them, the way they are getting their money, they are being charged at the least possible tax rate—not as regular income but as capital gains. But I am not going to get into that right now.

So what are the Republicans doing? They are saying we cannot extend the unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who are unemployed until and unless we have tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans. For those making over \$250,000, \$500,000, over \$1 million—they do not care; no matter what, no matter who you are, how much money you make—we have to give them tax breaks or we cannot extend unemployment benefits to the unemployed. You want to talk about hostages? The Republicans in this Congress are holding hostage the unemployed workers in America because they want to get the tax breaks for the wealthiest. That is what is happening here. I don't know that many of the American people know about that. Oh, they see us debate this stuff and back and forth about who is going to get these tax breaks, but right now unemployment benefits have run out. We have asked I think three or four times, if I am not mistaken, on the Senate floor for unanimous consent to extend

the unemployment benefits, and the Republicans have objected every single time. Why?

They wrote a letter. Yesterday, the Republican leader had a letter signed by every single Republican in the Senate that said they will not allow any bill to pass the Senate unless and until we pass a bill giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. It almost begs credulity. You wonder, is this real? Do they really mean that? Well, they signed their names to it. That means we can't extend unemployment benefits until we give in, until we give in to the Republicans and give tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. What a deal. What a deal—holding people who are at the end of their ropes—the most vulnerable in our society—holding them hostage for their Wall Street friends.

I have heard this said by some on the other side: Well, unemployment benefits make people lazy. If you give them unemployment benefits, they won't look for work.

Well, let me talk for a minute about what the labor market looks like right now, and we will see if these people are really lazy. Right now, there are 15 million people who want a job and can't find one but 9 million people forced to work part time because they can't get a full-time job. There are a number of other people who have looked for a job, and they have given up. They have been out of work for 2 years. As the Presiding Officer knows, after 99 weeks, you don't get any unemployment benefits whatsoever, and a lot of people have been out of work for over 99 weeks. They have nothing. That means our unemployment rate is not around 9 percent; it is actually about 17 to 18 percent. And these unemployed workers are looking for work.

What people have to understand is that before you can get unemployment benefits, you have to be actively looking for work. It is a requirement in order to get it. But what is happening out there? Workers can't find jobs because there aren't any. There is one job for every five workers. Well, it says here: 14.8 million workers unemployed. That is not really true. It is actually about 26 million. That is 14.8 million unemployed, but when you include those who have given up because they have gone beyond 99 weeks, when you take into account those who work part time because they were working full time but now they can only get a part-time job, it adds up to almost 26 million.

Let's just take the Bureau of Labor Statistics as they are: 14.8 million workers, 2.9 million jobs, 1 for about every 5. Actually, it is fewer than that. If you really look at the overall picture, it is really more like 1 in 8 to 1 in 10. So, in other words, for about every 8 to 10 workers, there is 1 job out there someplace. So most workers will lose on this kind of game of musical chairs. When you run around and the music stops, one person gets a job and six or seven people don't have one. So I chal-

lenge my Republican friends: How can six or seven or eight people find a job when there is only one available? That is why we have so many people facing long-term unemployment.

Over 6 million people have been out of work for more than half a year. I saw a lot of them who were here in Washington yesterday. Four in 10 workers, what we call the long-term unemployed, have been unemployed and looking for a job for at least 6 months. This is higher than during any previous recession.

There are extensions going back to 1950. In terms of the share of the total unemployed—you can see the graph here—in terms of who has been unemployed for more than 6 months—and as we can see, as we go from the 1950s to here, look at where this line now goes in 2010: more than we have ever had going clear back to the 1950s. Long-term unemployed, higher than any previous recession. It is the highest in 60 years. They are being held hostage by the Republicans.

Long-term unemployment is especially common among older workers over aged 50. These are people who have worked all their lives, they have saved for retirement, they have lost their jobs, and they are having a very difficult time finding new work. A year, year and a half, 2 years—I have met people out of work for well over 2 years. Again, they can't find work because it is not there, through no fault of their own.

So, as I said, our economy needs at least 11 million jobs—at least. To say that people who are unemployed are lazy and shouldn't get benefits—if you say that, you are obviously out of touch. You are out of touch with the real world and what is happening out there and the difficult circumstances that face our hard-working American families.

I get a lot of letters—and I am sure the occupant of the chair does too from his home State—from people who are just at their wit's end, and they just tear your heart out.

A 50-year-old woman from Altoona has been unemployed since November 2009, a year and a month. She wrote me: "I can't even get a job at McDonald's right now, and believe me, I have tried everywhere." Unemployment insurance is helping her get by, but she is worried about running out of benefits, which just happened 2 days ago. I got this letter before 2 days ago. Her unemployment benefits are out.

An unemployed schoolteacher from Estherville wrote me. She said:

I have not felt so humiliated in 20 years. I have been a productive and hard-working woman since I was 13, but now I feel insignificant.

She wrote me that this summer. This month, she wrote me again. She said:

I have tried to find employment in other States, all over Iowa, in every form of employment you can imagine: convenience stores, fast food, factories. I am a high school math teacher with three college de-

grees and I can't find a job. If it weren't for unemployment, I would be on food stamps.

But without unemployment insurance, she doesn't know what she is going to do. She just lost hers a couple of days ago too.

These are just two examples, but there are millions. In this holiday season, from now until the new year, 2 million people will be cut off if we don't continue these programs. In Iowa, my home State, more than 10,000 people will be cut off from their benefits during this holiday season. And if we don't do anything, we will face 6 million by April left without any source of income, hanging by a thread. Their savings are exhausted. Their unemployment benefits are the thin lifeline keeping them afloat.

Congress has never cut back emergency unemployment benefits when the unemployment rate was as high as it is now, and this is no time to start. Here it is again. Going back to 1959, when we had high rates of unemployment, every single time, Congress passed emergency funding to keep unemployment benefits going—that is, until now.

Republicans have said, oh, they will extend it, but they want to pay for it. It is about \$56 billion to extend it for 1 year. They have to pay for it, and how they want to pay for it is to take money out of the Recovery Act. There is still some unexpended money there that is going out for things such as roads and bridges and infrastructure projects that put people to work. So they want to take money from that, which is giving people some jobs and helping build our infrastructure, to put into unemployment benefits, when, going back to 1959, through Republican and Democratic administrations, we have always said this is an emergency, and that is the way we fund it.

Well, the Republicans say, we have a huge deficit. We can't do that anymore. Then why are they so intent on passing a tax cut bill, extending a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans and they don't pay for it? They put it on the deficit—not for \$56 billion but for \$700 billion. Oh, they are willing to do that. They are willing to do that for the wealthiest but not for people at the end of their rope, the unemployed.

So I guess we have entered a new era in this country. We don't help the unemployed: we just help the wealthy. That is all we do. That is why we are here, I guess. Look at that. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves. I ask, have my Republican friends lost all sense of fairness? Have my Republican friends on the other side of the aisle lost all sense of justice? Have they lost all sense of what is right and what is wrong? Where is the moral outrage? Where is the moral outrage that we are going to let people stand in the soup lines for Christmas but we are going to give tax breaks to the wealthiest? We are going to give million-dollar bonuses to the people on Wall Street who, by the way, caused a lot of these problems, and we won't even make them

pay their fair share of taxes. Where is the outrage? Well, I will tell you. It is out there. The American people are seeing this. They are saying: Wait a minute, Congress wants to pass this big tax break and they won't help the unemployed? They get it. They get it.

I can't believe Congress is doing this. I can't believe my friends on the other side of the aisle are so hard-hearted that they would hold hostage—that they would not let us move a bill to extend the unemployment benefits until we pass their bill to extend the tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. Where is our sense of moral outrage at this?

Just one other thing. Unemployment benefits that we give out to people is not money that is thrown down a rat-hole. Quite frankly, one of the best economic stimuli we have is unemployment benefits, believe it or not. Why is that? Well, because people who get unemployment benefits—and right now, in my State it averages about \$300 a week. That is about a national average. It is right about there. It is about \$300 a week. That is about \$15,000 a year. That is lower than the poverty wage, by the way. If you think unemployment benefits are some big deal, it is lower than the poverty wage. So when they get that money, what do they do? They go out and they buy groceries. They buy some clothes for the kids. They buy the necessities of life. And that money acts as a multiplier to our economy.

This is Mark Zandi, Moody's economy.com, about how the GDP increase is generated by \$1 of stimulus going to these various things. Food stamps is the best. For every dollar we put into food stamps, we get an increase in GDP of \$1.74, again because people spend that money to buy food, most of which is grown, produced, processed, packaged, shipped, and bought in America. Unemployment benefits are right next to food stamps—\$1.61 increase in GDP for every dollar we put out, again for the same reason. People using unemployment benefits are not using them to buy a Mercedes. They are not using the benefits to buy a new, high-definition, 3D flat screen TV made in Japan. They are not using the benefits to buy a gold-encrusted, diamond-studded Rolex watch made in Switzerland. They are using these benefits to buy the necessities of life, most of which are made here in America. Extending the Bush tax cuts—for every dollar we put in, we get back 32 cents in GDP growth.

That is what the Republicans want. Why, when trying to stimulate the economy, would we put \$1 into something that returns us only 32 cents, when we can put \$1 in and get back \$1.61? How about infrastructure investments. We get back \$1.57 for every \$1. It is very close to unemployment benefits. Yet Republicans want to take money out of this and put it here. Why don't we take money out of here—the tax cuts—and put it here? That is a

better deal for our economy. It creates jobs, and we get an increase in economic activity in our country.

As I said earlier, here it is. The average UI benefit is about \$15,600 and the poverty level is \$21,756 for a family of four. It is a powerful benefit that provides food, clothes, housing, utilities—all of the things needed just to keep life going. That is what these unemployment benefits are spent on.

With the holidays coming, our economy needs the money and people need the benefits. Cutting off that revenue would be counterproductive for jobs. It is counterproductive for the people who need these benefits. It makes no sense economically to cut off unemployment benefits. But more importantly, it makes no sense morally. There is such a thing as right and wrong. There is such a thing as fair and unfair and just and unjust. It is not just, it is not fair, and it is not right that, through no fault of their own, we are saying to these people, the unemployed in America, the millions—whether it is 14.9 million or closer to 26 million or anywhere in between—it is just not right to say: Well, maybe we will extend your unemployment benefits after we extend the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest in our society. That is totally irresponsible. But that is where we find ourselves.

I say to the President of the United States: Mr. President, you made a lot of promises when you were campaigning in my State of Iowa, and one of the most important you made was that you were going to hold the line—and you said this time and time again—at \$250,000. You would extend the tax breaks to middle-income people below \$250,000. You ought to hold to that, Mr. President. You ought to hold to that.

We will see if the Republicans want to shut down the government. Do they want to shut the government down? That is what they are saying. We are going to have to have a resolution on the Senate floor—because it will run out—to keep the government going. They are saying they will not pass that unless and until we extend the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy.

I dare the Republicans to shut the government down just because they want to give tax breaks to the wealthy. I say if that is what they want to do, let the American people see the extent to which the Republicans will go in order to help their wealthy friends.

Mr. President, hold to your guns, hold to your guns on \$250,000 and below. Don't give in. Don't give up. The American people are behind you on this one, Mr. President. Tell them you want unemployment benefits extended, you want middle-class tax breaks extended, and we want to fund the government. We don't want to go into default. We want that first. Don't give up, Mr. President. The American people will be behind you, and this Congress will be behind you too.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, today the House passed legislation that would extend the tax cuts for those middle-class taxpayers who make under \$200,000 a year. That is a good thing, and I support that. But why on Earth would we extend the tax cuts for a certain segment of the population and not extend the tax cuts for everyone? Why would we do that? Who are the job creators in our country? What is the problem our country has right now? It is jobs. We have an unemployment rate that is hovering around 10 percent. So what should we be doing in Congress to try to alleviate that situation? We should be doing everything in our power to create jobs in the private sector. The private sector is where jobs will be created, where it will be something that will support a family.

Of course, we are going to support tax cuts for everyone in this country because we are in an economic recession. The idea of increasing taxes on the people who would create jobs is something that could only come out of Washington. All of us have been home for the last few weeks. Last week was Thanksgiving, and we were in grocery stores talking to our constituents. Time and time again I heard people in the real world, people who are creating jobs, saying: Why don't you all address the issues of this country? Don't you know what is happening?

Well, do you know something? They have a point. They have a point because, of course, many of us have been saying this for a long time. But here we are in December, the last month of the year. The IRS can't even print the tax forms because they don't know what the tax rates are going to be because Congress left in September and didn't finish its job. Now here we are in December and we are going to have a train wreck.

That is why those on our side signed a letter saying that we are not going to address any issue until we settle the tax issue and the issue of funding government. After that, there are many things that could be on the agenda. But those are two things that are essential. So knowing the way things work around here, and knowing that we could end up talking for 2 more weeks before we do anything, we are going to set the priority to say that it is tax cuts and it is funding the government, and if we can do other things, fine, but if we can't, then we go home.

I think the START Treaty is very important, and we are all looking at that. But we have to make sure the small businesspeople of our country know what to expect. And if they can hire people on even in this holiday season, it will make a difference.

President Reagan and President Kennedy and President Bush 43 all did something that had the same effect on our revenue in this country; they cut taxes and revenue increased. Cutting taxes is what increases and spurs the

economy, and it works every time. So now we are talking about deciding who is going to get their tax cuts and who isn't.

We should be saying clearly and simply to the American people—and especially the small businesspeople who are waiting to see what their budgets are going to be next year—we are not going to raise taxes on anybody because we want you to hire; we want you to give jobs to the people of this country. If we can extend unemployment for those who have been out of work and can't find something, and they are really trying, and we can do it in a responsible way and pay for it, hopefully—I believe if we cut taxes, that will spur the economy and pay for it.

Tomorrow, apparently, in the Senate we are going to get the House bill that passed today that cuts taxes for some but not all. So what will happen if we do what the House has suggested? Households will lose, on average, \$20,000 in total disposable personal income between 2011 and 2020. Total individual income taxes will increase by \$37 million between 2011 and 2020. Jobs will be lost and small businesses are not going to hire. I can tell you that anecdotally because I have been talking to the small business owners in my State. I was a small business owner, and I know what it takes to increase employment.

Without action by us, the death tax will return with a vengeance. A lot of people think: Oh, a death tax, that is just going to affect the heirs of rich people. I think we have to remember that estates over \$1 million will be taxed at the 55-percent rate. So many small businesses in this country are either farms or ranches, where the valuation at death on the property is going to be so much higher than the productivity on that land, and the heirs are going to be faced with selling the property to pay the taxes, which means it will no longer have any capacity for hiring people or productivity.

The same is true for small manufacturing companies. I was a small manufacturer. I can tell you my equipment was worth a whole lot more than the productivity of that equipment. You can pay for it over time, so you own the equipment. But then if you die and your heirs have to pay a huge estate tax on the value of equipment, then they are going to have to sell the equipment and, therefore, you have lost the business.

The statistics in this country of family businesses that are passed to the second generation and the third generation are abysmal. It is about 50 percent that goes to the second generation. To the third generation, it is 20 to 30 percent. Who does that hurt? Of course, it hurts the families. It also hurts the employees of those family-owned businesses. They are the ones who will be put out of work. So the estate tax going to 55 percent over \$1 million is not good public policy. It would be outrageous for us to leave

this year and go into that kind of estate tax, which is confiscatory.

I have to tell you, I think it walks away from the American dream. The American dream is that you can start from nothing in this country and you can build something and you can give the fruits of your labor to your children. That is the American dream. That is what people come here and work for 7 days a week in restaurants, to try to build something to give to their children. Who are we to take that away? That is the American dream. But it will be gone at the end of this year if we don't address that issue in Congress.

Capital gains and dividends: How many of our seniors are living on capital gains and dividends? I guarantee you, anybody who has a bank account knows you are not earning anything from that. You are not earning from cash because the interest rates are so low that many of our seniors are struggling. If they have a nest egg of stocks that is paying some dividends, then that is what many of them are living on. So we are going to raise the tax on dividends from 15 percent to 20 percent at a time when so many seniors are struggling. That is what is going to happen if we don't address the tax cuts by the end of this year.

The marriage penalty: That is my bill. I introduced relief from the marriage penalty. Why should two people working get married and go into a higher tax bracket in this country? We addressed that issue. For most people, we have eliminated the marriage penalty, but not at the end of this year, if we don't act, the marriage penalty comes back. So a policeman and a schoolteacher who marry are going to have to pay about \$1,400 more in taxes just because they want to get married—a schoolteacher and a policeman. It is an absolute fact. Is that what we want in this country?

Small business owners pay at the individual rates—a subchapter S small business. Many small businesses are created to be able to pay at the individual tax rate. Over 50 percent of the small businesses in our country pay at the individual tax rate. So now we are going to say individuals' tax rates are going to go up if they make over \$250,000, which is many of the small businesses in our country, so they are going to be paying at the higher rate. These are the things that are going to happen if we don't act.

The House passed legislation that is going to be devastating for the people who are unemployed in this country. How could we even think of doing something so drastic? I hope tomorrow when the Senate takes up the House bill that we send it back to the House and say: This is not going to go.

I will say to the President of the United States: I thought, Mr. President, that you said you were open to working on extending the taxes for everyone, and yet here we are, with the leadership of the House who just talked

to the President this week, and we have the same thing they have been talking about for all these months—no give, nothing has changed.

So here we are, it is December, and the people of America expect the leaders of Congress to address the issues that are on people's minds. We are 3 weeks from Christmas, we are 4 weeks from the end of the year. How could we leave without taking responsible action to let everyone in this country who is paying taxes know how to plan for—I would hope for 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 years?

Lastly, Mr. President, I want to say the one thing that seems to be missing in the Halls of Congress is the importance—to a family, but also to a small business especially that is thinking of expanding and hiring people—of stability and predictability. You can't say we are going to extend the tax cuts for 1 year or 2 years and do the right thing for the economy of our country. We ought to do it permanently, to be honest. But if you are not going to do it permanently, at least do it for 5 years, or, at a minimum, 2 or 3 years.

It is not going to cost the government to give these tax cuts. We are keeping it the way it is now. We are trying to spur jobs being created in our country. So when people talk about this is going to cost the government X billion dollars to let people keep the money they have earned, they are going right over the heads of the American people.

So predictability is the most important thing we can do for small businesses so they can plan, so they can say we are going to expand our product line, we are going to expand our service area. These are the things they can do if they know what their tax commitments are going to be, and if they know what their health care costs are going to be. That is what is freezing the economy right now because people don't know what to expect.

So I hope the President is listening. I hope the leadership of the Senate is listening. Most certainly, I hope the House of Representatives will come to the table and see we can do better than this, and we ought to do it before we leave this week or next week so people know what to expect; so small businesses can sit down at the end of the year and plan their businesses and create jobs in this country. That is the Christmas present people would like. They want jobs. They want to work to support their families. They do not want to live on unemployment. They do not want to live on food stamps. That is not a life. It is not a future. It is not hope. That is what they want—a future and hope for their families.

So I hope, myself, that we, the leaders of America, will give the American people what they deserve and what clearly is in the long-term best interests of their families.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I come to the floor, as many of us have done in recent weeks, to pay tribute to a Member of Congress who is retiring—to a great Floridian and a great American, a man I am proud to call a colleague and a friend, Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART is retiring after 18 years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Born in Havana, Cuba, LINCOLN came to the United States in 1959, at the age of 4 years old. His father, Rafael Lincoln Diaz-Balart, had just been elected a senator in Cuba, but he could not take office or remain in Cuba because of the rise of the dictator Fidel Castro.

LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART rose in the House of Representatives to become a senior member of the Rules Committee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Legislative and Subcommittees, and is now the co-chairman of our congressional delegation. He is also the chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute.

LINCOLN grew up in south Florida. He attended public schools there and high school, but he also attended school in Madrid, Spain. He received a degree in international relations from New College in Sarasota and obtained a diploma in British politics in Cambridge, England. He received his law degree from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

LINCOLN started the practice of law in Miami. He worked for Legal Services of Greater Miami, providing free legal services to the poor. He was subsequently an assistant state's attorney, prosecuting those who committed crimes, and a partner in the prestigious Fowler, White law firm.

LINCOLN was first elected into politics in the Florida Legislature back in 1986, but quickly—just 3 years later—ran for the U.S. Congress. In 1992, he served his first term as a Representative of Florida's 21st Congressional District and served as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In 1994, LINCOLN became the first Hispanic in history to be named to the powerful Rules Committee. In 1996, he drafted much of the legislation that strengthened the embargo against Cuba and its dictatorship.

In 1997, he showed his penchant for helping those in need by successfully carrying out efforts to restore the supplemental security income and food assistance to legal immigrants who were denied aid by the welfare reform law of the previous year.

As a member of the House Rules Committee, on September 14, 2001, Congressman DIAZ-BALART took to the floor of the House the joint resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan after the September 11 attacks.

Congressman DIAZ-BALART lives in Miami with his wife Cristina and their two sons Lincoln and Daniel. When he retires, Florida will lose one of its strongest voices, as will this country and all those who care about freedom around the world.

He has fought for Florida's families with integrity and effectiveness. From his time in the State senate to his service in Congress, he has served with passion, drive, and a steadfast determination to do what is right. Most of all, and what I appreciate him most for, he has been a champion of freedom and democracy, not only in Cuba but throughout Latin America and the world.

No one in Congress is more passionate about ending the oppression that Cubans suffer under the current regime. His efforts are known not only here but throughout the world. He is a voice of change, and he is a passionate believer in the rights of people everywhere to be free. He speaks for political prisoners held in the regime's prisons, he speaks for those who suffer beatings for speaking out against their captors, and he speaks for everyday Cubans who hunger for the freedom they have never felt.

I have heard LINCOLN speak many times about the plight of the Cuban people. I have seen his desire to see the people of Cuba enjoy the prize of liberty that has been denied them for more than 50 years. When he speaks about these issues, you feel his passion. His voice has been a great voice for a life of liberty throughout Florida, this country, and the world.

To know LINCOLN is to know one of his heroes—his father Rafael Diaz-Balart, a well-respected public servant. When he had to leave Cuba in 1959, he arrived in the United States and established the White Rose, the first anti-Castro civic organization. When LINCOLN returns to Florida, he will lead a nonprofit inspired by the White Rose. I know his father is looking down from Heaven and will continue to be proud of his son.

The House of Representatives will not be the same without his talents, but Florida will continue to benefit by having him back at home full time. As an article in his hometown paper—the Miami Herald—noted, even though LINCOLN has announced his retirement, the pulpit will change but the passion will not. To me, LINCOLN will always be a steadfast ally in the cause for freedom 90 miles away from our shores in Florida. He knows that freedom is not negotiable, and its cause is the most noble cause in the world. Our country and our world is better off because of my friend LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART.

I will always be grateful to him because when I came here to the Senate

with him and his brother MARIO DIAZ-BALART, another great champion for freedom, I was mentored in the issues that affect my State and so many of the people in my State who come from Cuba and other countries in Latin America. Through their mentoring and through their passion and through the education they provided to me, I was better able to understand his plight, a plight that I don't think most of my colleagues can know as well as we can in Florida—that just 90 miles from our shore is an evil dictator who oppresses his people.

When I am in Florida talking with folks, oftentimes I will make the remark, if I am, say, in Orlando, FL: Can they imagine that just 90 miles away, say, in West Palm Beach, FL, that it would be illegal to speak out against the government, illegal to practice your religion, illegal to gather together in association to express your political views—all of the freedoms we sometimes take for granted? Just 90 miles from our shore, people are jailed, are killed for trying to exercise those freedoms.

It was brought home to me most when I was visited recently by a man by the name of Ariel Sigler. Ariel was a political prisoner in Cuba for 7 years. He has recently been released, and he was in Miami receiving medical care. Ariel is a man who was a professional boxer, a large, strapping man. But he didn't just fight with his hands; he also raised his voice for freedom in his native Cuba. When he did so, he was thrown in jail, and now he is a man who is about 100 pounds less in weight, whose once towering frame is relegated to a wheelchair because for 7 years he was imprisoned just for wanting to criticize his government. He was put in a small cell with several other prisoners. He was fed maggot-infested food, and he had to wash in a pipe and drink from a pipe sitting outside his cell, as did all the other prisoners. It made him sick, desperately sick. This happens just 90 miles from the shore of this country. It is intolerable.

But I know of this, and my heart bleeds for the Cuban people because of the great work of Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART. So we will miss him. His voice has fought for freedom in this body, in the U.S. Congress, for 18 years. But as the Miami Herald said: The pulpit will change but the passion will not.

We know he will continue to hold that lamp of freedom and be an advocate for free people and people who yearn to be free throughout the world.

I yield the floor.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. LEMIEUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:19 p.m., recessed until 9:38 p.m. and