

Does it make sense to anyone but our Republican colleagues who, once again, are telling us that rewarding the wealthiest helps us all, that that wealth somehow trickles down and creates jobs? I say: Show me the jobs. We cut taxes for that universe of taxpayers, the highest income taxpayers in the Nation, and they said it would create jobs. Well, show me. Where are they? In the year the Bush tax cuts were passed, unemployment was under 5 percent. After nearly a decade under Bush's tax policy, unemployment has doubled. It now stands at nearly 10 percent. Now they are saying we need to reward the rich again and it will create jobs. Well, in my view, the Bush Republican tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires has been the biggest failed jobs program in our Nation's history. But what it did do is add enormously to the debt.

I have listened to those who have come here talking about the consequences of debt. Yet they are rushing to add to that debt in dramatic ways, all for the wealthiest people in our country. So my question to my Republican colleagues who believe that only debt-financed tax cuts for millionaires can fix the economy is this: Where is the prosperity that President Bush promised to the middle class when these cuts were passed a decade ago?

In fact, let's look at that decade. The Bush decade will go down in history as one of the worst decades the middle class has ever faced. While the wealthiest saw their incomes swell and their taxes plummet, middle-class salaries remained stagnated. Families' costs, such as health care and college tuitions, skyrocketed, and jobs disappeared overseas. The stock market sputtered along at the same levels it achieved under the Clinton-era tax rates. Middle-class wages have continued to lose ground to inflation and health care costs, and millions more now live in poverty than before these tax cuts were passed.

When the unregulated greed on Wall Street led to millions of Americans losing their jobs, Republicans said: You are on your own—literally. Literally, on this very floor—while leading a filibuster against an extension of unemployment benefits, and asked, How is it you can do that to these people who, through no fault of their own, face the unemployment line—one Republican retorted: Tough—and the rest of it you can fill in the blank—to pleas from families desperate for help.

If Republicans were truly in this debate to create jobs and protect the middle class, then why did the Republican leader introduce a bill that is actually a tax increase on millions—a tax increase on millions—of middle-class American families? Yes, a tax increase. That is right. The Republican bill offered by their leader spends \$1 trillion more. Yet the vast majority of Americans would see their taxes increase if it were to become law. Why? Because President Obama's tax cut for 95 per-

cent of Americans—for so many middle-class families—was not a large enough priority to make it into their package. Gutting the estate tax was but additional middle-class tax relief was not.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office—the one entity both Democrats and Republicans depend upon for the scoring of our efforts, for thinking about what are the best job-producing initiatives and whatnot—has found the most effective way—this is them, through their studies—to create jobs. They say the “biggest bang for the buck” is extending jobless benefits, and ranking right behind in terms of effectiveness are payroll tax cuts and small business tax incentives.

The chairman's bill contains all of that—all that the Congressional Budget Office has said are the biggest creators of jobs.

The Republican leader's bill contains none—zero—of those initiatives. The Congressional Budget Office has determined the Republican package does not contain even one of the most effective ideas for job creation. So if Republicans are in this debate to create jobs, why don't they include the proposals that economists are telling us are the most effective in creating jobs?

We know Republicans have said no to everything. We know the Republican leadership's top priority is not middle-class families but defeating President Obama. But we cannot tolerate the harm their political strategy will do to middle-class families. They are even willing, for the sake of their political strategy—which is to have this President fail, which means not whether the President fails but whether the country fails—to hold hostage permanent middle-class tax relief, for multimillionaires and billionaires.

I urge my colleagues to remember those who are struggling this holiday season to keep their homes, to find a job, and to provide for their families. I urge my Republican colleagues during this kind, forgiving time of year to open their hearts and change their political playbook. Their political playbook maybe has brought them some success, but it puts middle-class families at enormous risk. There is no reason the Senate cannot have a bipartisan vote or a simple majority vote on making reality permanent tax cuts of \$250,000 or less for our families and to give businesses the certainty they need by creating an extension for those who are unemployed, which will create opportunities for the private sector and Build America Bonds to get us working again. That is all in this package. It will give relief from the alternative minimum tax.

That is the vote we are going to have—all of that. Saying no to that in order to help the wealthiest people in the country—those we applaud for their hard work and ingenuity, but those who are willing, I believe, to help their country and have the best where-withal to do so—is just simply a polit-

ical game book that should be ultimately abandoned. If not, in this vote, Republicans will have abandoned the middle class of this country at a time in which they need our support the greatest.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING VELMA BISHOP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and offer my condolences for the passing of a great Nevadan, Velma Bishop. A naturalized U.S. citizen from Canada, Velma labored diligently in many charitable and civic opportunities and programs. She was a wonderful mother and a wife of 45 years to her beloved late husband, Gail Alexander Bishop. Not only will her local, religious, and political communities miss her impact, but so will the great multitudes of people she has been able to touch through a life devoted to service. It is my great honor to recognize her life's work before the U.S. Senate today.

The State of Nevada will miss Velma's can-do spirit. She sacrificed much of her personal time volunteering with special-needs children and orphans. Many people with no biological relation nonetheless knew her as “mom.” Her arms were open for anyone; her kind spirit will always be remembered. She was also a very involved member of her local congregation in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Velma worked diligently to raise money for nonprofit concerns and even found time to manage various campaigns for the Democratic Party of Nevada. She never shied away from voicing northern Nevada's needs. Until recently, she continued playing an active role in the Gail Bishop Chapter of the Nevada Alliance for Retired Americans, aptly named after her late husband. Her involvement in the public service back home found her befriending many of the underrepresented or overworked. She battled courageously on their behalf. Among her many mourners is the former Rep. Jim Bilbray, D-Nevada.

I join with my friends back home in Nevada to honor the wonderful life of Velma Bishop. For 81 years she has immersed herself in enhancing the lives of others. I am grateful to recognize her achievements, and with a heavy heart, know that many people join Susan, Steve, and Kate in missing their “mom.”

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT JASON T. SMITH

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life and heroic service of SGT Jason T. Smith. Sergeant Smith, assigned to the 1st Explosive Ordnance Company, based in Iwakuni, Japan, died on November 19, 2010, from wounds he received while serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was 28 years old.

A native of Colorado Springs, CO, Sergeant Smith graduated from Doherty High School in 2000. Upon graduation, Sergeant Smith enlisted in the Marines and was quickly recognized as a skilled and composed soldier. He served three tours of duty: two in Iraq and one in Afghanistan all with decoration.

During his 10 years of service, Sergeant Smith distinguished himself through his courage, dedication to duty, and willingness to take on one of the most dangerous and skillful jobs in the Marines—defusing bombs. Fellow soldiers respected his intensity, and they relied heavily on his leadership. Sergeant Smith was also a gifted teacher, and Marines under his command cite his marksmanship instruction as a high-point in their career.

Sergeant Smith worked on the front lines of battle, serving in the most dangerous areas of Iraq and Afghanistan. He is remembered by those who knew him as a consummate professional with an unending commitment to excellence. His family remembers him as a dedicated son, brother, and as a loving husband to his wife. In his free time, Sergeant Smith enjoyed fishing and playing basketball.

Mark Twain once said, “The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.” Sergeant Smith’s service was in keeping with this sentiment—by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

He braved the chaos of combat zones throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. And though his fate on the battlefield was uncertain, he pushed forward, protecting America’s citizens, her safety, and the freedoms we hold dear. For his service and the lives he touched, Sergeant Smith will forever be remembered as one of our country’s bravest.

To Sergeant Smith’s entire family—I cannot imagine the sorrow you must be feeling. I hope that, in time, the pain of your loss will be eased by your pride in Jason’s service and by your knowledge that his country will never forget him. We are humbled by his service and his sacrifice.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I rise today to salute a number of organizations from my home State of Utah that have demonstrated vision as they plan

for the needs of our future. Utah is one of the fastest growing States in the country. Our rapid population growth is attributed to both the area’s high birth rate and to in-migration. We have a strong economy and have continued to attract workers during the recent economic recession. Yet even as we grow, our transportation system has not buckled under the pressure of explosive development. Regional and community planners, as well as business and political leaders have been looking forward to plan and meet the transportation infrastructure needs of our growing population. Our transit system of buses, vans, light rail and commuter rail is unparalleled and I am proud of the role I played in bringing TRAX and FrontRunner, our light rail and commuter rail services to the Wasatch Front. Last Thursday, November 25, 2010, marked 10 years that TRAX has been serving our communities. This expanding network has brought new possibilities to our residents and creates an economic rebirth in each community it touches.

There are a number of lessons that other areas can learn from the success of Utah’s transit expansion. Planning for the needs of a changing population should be the standard, rather than the exception in every community. Recently, Utah was again recognized for its innovative planning. Last month the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, announced a \$5 million award to support the creation of more livable and sustainable communities along the Wasatch Front. This funding will support development of a regional housing plan through a new initiative intended to build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation. This grant is part of a new Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which brings EPA, HUD, USDA and DOT together to ensure that the agencies’ policies, programs, and funding consider affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection together. I support the efforts of this interagency collaboration designed to get better results for American communities and to use taxpayer money more efficiently. I salute the Utah organizations whose vision brought this important grant to our State. The Utah consortium behind the grant is made up of the following partners—the Wasatch Front Regional Council, Mountainland Association of Governments, Envision Utah, the Utah Department of Transportation, UDOT, Utah Transit Authority, UTA, Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, University of Utah’s Metropolitan Research Center and Bureau of Economic and Business Research, the Utah Chapter of the American Planning Association and other public and private sector partners. These visionaries joined together to apply for this grant through a nationwide competitive process to implement the growth strategies and vision in the region.

Over the past decade, public, private, academic and community leaders in Utah developed quality growth strategies for the Salt Lake metropolitan region. In 2010, they developed and adopted a regional vision, the Wasatch Choice for 2040, which is a blueprint for our region’s future. The sustainable communities grant Utah received will help make that blueprint a reality.

My friend and colleague, Senator DODD of Connecticut has introduced legislation that would create more of these grants, and go a step further by creating an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. This office would oversee efforts to help local communities plan for and create better and more affordable places to live, work, and raise families. The legislation would incentivize communities to make regional plans like Utah’s Wasatch Choice for 2040 and would fund sustainable development projects. I believe that with effective policies to encourage sustainable development, our communities will cut traffic congestion; reduce greenhouse gas emissions and gasoline consumption; protect rural areas and green spaces; revitalize existing Main Streets and urban centers; and create more affordable housing.

While I strongly support many of the ideas in this legislation, I have not added myself as a cosponsor, because of some concerns that have been raised. First and foremost, during this time of out of control spending, I feel it would be irresponsible of me to support the legislation without a plan to pay for the new spending it would create. It is my hope that some sort of a livable communities component will be included in a much needed transportation authorization bill that Congress should consider next year. This discussion of the future of the highway trust fund should also address the important of local planning efforts. I would also like to see a greater voice for small businesses and affected industries that would no doubt be greatly affected by the policies set in an effort to encourage sustainability. There are many important interests that need to be considered and included in the discussion.

The partnership between the Utah Transit Authority and our local, regional and State transportation planning organizations is a great example for many States. I feel confident that Utah will use the livable communities grant we are going to receive to continue to lead the nation in transportation and infrastructure planning. I urge my colleagues to give full consideration and take the time to learn and debate the ideas proposed in my friend Senator DODD’s legislation, S. 1619, the Livable Communities Act.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mrs. Neiman, one of his secretaries.