

Corker	Inhofe	Roberts
Cornyn	Isakson	Sessions
Crapo	Johanns	Shelby
DeMint	Kirk	Snowe
Ensign	Kyl	Thune
Enzi	LeMieux	Vitter
Graham	Lugar	Voinovich
Grassley	McCain	Warner
Hagan	McConnell	Wicker
Hatch	Murkowski	
Hutchison	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Brownback Gregg

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 55, the nays are 43. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as always happens, there are always bumps in the road here in the Senate, most of which we don't foresee. We have scheduled now four votes. We are going to move to the next one as soon as we can. The House of Representatives is in the process of voting on the DREAM Act, but they may not get to it for a couple of hours. I need to have them finish their vote before we vote over here. So having said that, we may be in a little downtime here after we finish this vote for a couple of hours or whenever we can get to it. They have to have that vote completed over there. They know we are in a hurry. We also will get today from them the continuing resolution that will allow us to do something about spending. I am doing my best to work through these issues, including the issue that has overwhelmed us all the last few days, and that is the framework for the tax thing that has been negotiated. The main reason for interrupting is the next two votes will not flow automatically. We need to do them sometime tonight. I am working with Senator COLLINS and Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator LEVIN and others to try to come up with some way to move forward on the Defense bill. We will see if that can be done. There are a lot of other things going on around here such as the START treaty and a few other things. We are trying to work through that. I am sorry we will not be able to proceed right through these votes, but we may have to have a downtime for a few hours.

EMERGENCY SENIOR CITIZENS RELIEF ACT OF 2010—MOTION TO PROCEED

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are now 4 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the next vote.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would like a minute and a half, and I will yield to Senator WHITEHOUSE the remaining 30 seconds.

The reality today is that millions of senior citizens and disabled vets are hurting. They are spending a whole lot of money on prescription drugs, a whole lot of money on health care. Yet for the last 2 years they have not got-

ten any COLA because, in my view, of a poor methodology in terms of how we determine COLAs for senior citizens.

What this amendment does is provide a one-time \$250 check to senior citizens and disabled vets. That is what it does. This amendment is supported by AARP, the largest senior group in America; the American Legion; Veterans of Foreign Wars; the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, and virtually every senior group and every veterans organization.

People are wondering how it could be that we could provide \$1 million in tax breaks to the richest people in this country but we cannot come up with \$250 for struggling seniors and disabled vets.

I hope my colleagues will support this important piece of legislation.

I yield to my colleague from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, Rhode Island seniors get an average Social Security benefit of \$13,500 a year, which makes it tough sledding to live on in the cold Northeast in the wintertime.

The COLA adjustment is misfiring for seniors. Their heating costs go up, their prescription costs go up, their pharmaceutical costs go up, and we have missed the COLA twice. We fixed it in 2008 with a one-time vote. We fixed it in 2009 with a one-time vote. Let's please do it again for 2010 and support Senator SANDERS' amendment and not be scrooges to our seniors while we are being fabulously generous to megamillionaires.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on October 15, 2010, we learned that next year Social Security beneficiaries will not receive a cost of living adjustment for the second year in a row because of the economic deflation, rather than inflation, our economy experienced in 2010. At a time when the economy continues to lag and seniors in Vermont and around the country will struggle to afford heat, food, and other daily living expenses, I believe strongly that Congress needs to act to help seniors who depend upon Social Security benefits.

For decades, Social Security has represented a strong commitment to our Nation's seniors. Ever since Ida May Fuller of Vermont received the first Social Security check issued, vulnerable seniors have had a safety net to fall back on in retirement and to supplement individual retirement savings or pensions. Nearly 70 percent of beneficiaries depend on Social Security for at least half of their income, and Social Security is the sole source of income for 15 percent of recipients.

I was proud to join Senator SANDERS once again in cosponsoring the Emergency Senior Citizens Relief Act, which would provide all Social Security recipients, railroad retirees, SSI beneficiaries and adults receiving veterans' benefits with a one-time additional check for \$250 in 2010, similar to the payment beneficiaries received as a

part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Today, we have the opportunity to move to debate this important emergency relief for America's seniors.

This legislation would benefit 58 million Americans and over 120,000 Vermonters, far too many of whom have seen a decline in their living standards as the economy worsened. The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare Foundation and the Economic Policy Institute issued a report this fall that showed similar payments included in the Recovery Act to seniors stimulated the economy and was an effective job creator. A minority of Senators, however, plan on once again blocking this legislation from a full debate in the Senate. The minority party seems content to bend over backwards to pass an extension of tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans, which will add hundreds of billions of dollars to the deficit, but helping seniors in tough economic times is just too costly a proposition. That is unfortunate, and I hope for enough support in the Senate to move this legislation forward.

By supporting this bill, Senators have the opportunity to express our continued commitment to providing a safety net to our Nation's seniors and those with disabilities in this uncertain economy. I urge my fellow Senators to support the motion to invoke cloture on the Emergency Senior Citizens Relief Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we yield back the time on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 655, S. 3985, the Emergency Senior Citizens Relief Act of 2010.

Harry Reid, Richard J. Durbin, Bernard Sanders, Sherrod Brown, Debbie Stabenow, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patrick J. Leahy, Byron L. Dorgan, John D. Rockefeller, IV, Charles E. Schumer, Al Franken, Barbara A. Mikulski, Jack Reed, Frank R. Lautenberg, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Mark Begich, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tom Udall.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 3985, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from

Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Akaka	Franken	Murray
Baucus	Gillibrand	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Inouye	Pryor
Bennet	Johnson	Reed
Bingaman	Kerry	Reid
Boxer	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Brown (OH)	Kohl	Sanders
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Lautenberg	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Specter
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Conrad	Lincoln	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Dodd	McCaskill	Webb
Dorgan	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Mikulski	

NAYS—45

Alexander	Ensign	Lugar
Barraso	Enzi	McCain
Bennett	Feingold	McConnell
Bond	Graham	Murkowski
Brown (MA)	Grassley	Risch
Bunning	Hagan	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Sessions
Chambliss	Hutchison	Shelby
Coburn	Inhofe	Snowe
Cochran	Isakson	Thune
Collins	Johanns	Udall (CO)
Corker	Kirk	Vitter
Cornyn	Kyl	Voinovich
Crapo	LeMieux	Warner
DeMint	Lieberman	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Brownback	Gregg
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 45. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go into a period of morning business until 6:30 tonight, and that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, 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. 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.

REJECTION OF COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I stand here simply amazed at what happened in the Senate, although I probably shouldn't be. I stand here amazed because in these economic times, senior citizens from Gallipolis to Ash-

tabula, to Middletown, to Toledo, in my State, and from the Iron Range to Rochester, MN, the State of the Presiding Officer, and all across this country, who didn't get a cost-of-living adjustment this year; who are victims of inflation—medical inflation especially—and the inflation rate is not very high in our society, so they didn't get a cost-of-living adjustment, even though their cost of living has gone up—every single Republican in this institution—every single Republican—voted no on a \$250 one-time check to go to senior citizens. It would have meant the equivalent of about 1½ percent or less than that cost-of-living adjustment.

If they are so interested in balancing the budget that they do not want to do that, maybe that is one argument—although not a very good one in these economic times—but when, in the same week, they sign a letter saying we are not going to do anything—every single Republican signed a letter saying we are not going to do anything in the Senate—we are not voting yes on anything until we get the tax cut for millionaires and billionaires, that is pretty outrageous.

In the tax cut they are asking for, someone who makes \$10 million a year gets a \$40,000 tax cut—I am sorry, somebody making \$10 million a year gets a \$100,000 tax cut, I believe; somebody making \$1 million gets a \$40,000 tax cut. And they are saying they are willing to vote for that, but they are not willing to vote for \$250 for every senior citizen in this country.

The cost of that, if you want to get in the weeds and talk about budget issues, the cost of that \$250 that Senator SANDERS sponsored would be about \$13 billion. The cost of these tax cuts for the wealthy is about \$700 billion over the next 10 years.

Basically, what they are doing, what we are doing for their tax cuts for the wealthy is in essence borrowing \$700 billion from China and putting it on our children's and grandchildren's credit card to pay off later—let them worry about it—and giving that money to millionaires and billionaires. They are willing to do that, but they will not vote \$250, a total of \$13 billion one time. They are not willing, for this year, to help those seniors in Youngstown and Lima and Zanesville and Chillicothe and Tipp City, OH. I just don't get it.

I know it is the Christmas season. That is not a reason to do it, but you would think there would be a little more generosity in their hearts during this most difficult time for seniors who are barely making it. The average senior citizen in this country gets about \$14,000 Social Security a year. Many seniors in my State, in places such as Columbus and Dayton and Portsmouth, live on not much more than their Social Security check, and a \$250 payment would have made a difference—maybe not having to split their medicine in two and taking half a dosage

each time or maybe actually being able to heat their homes as it gets colder and colder as the winter comes upon us, that they would have a little opportunity to at least do that and live a little more comfortably.

Instead this place again said yes to tax cuts for the rich, no to the senior citizens. A majority of Senators voted for this, but every single Republican voted against it. I don't get it. I don't mean to sound partisan, but when it is like that it is unbelievable. When Senators—most of us are going to go home and enjoy our holidays—that we would put our Nation's seniors through something like that.

I yield the floor and 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. COBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for the time I may consume, probably not longer than 20 or 25 minutes.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I hope the American people are watching Washington right now. We are at a defining moment in our country. There is not anybody in this body who does not recognize that our country is on an unsustainable course. They know it. It is well known. The world knows it. We can argue about how close we are to the debt crisis and the liquidity crisis, but no one disputes that one is coming. We just don't know when. Yet in the next 2 weeks Congress is going to make that problem \$1 trillion worse.

We can say that a lot of what we are doing is the right thing to do, but what we are not doing is addressing the real issues that need to be accompanied by grownups as we look at this. What should the American people make of this? It is kind of like we are on the Titanic here in America and everybody is saying: The bar is open, we will just have a party the next 2 weeks. We are going to spend another \$900 billion or we are going to set it up so that it can be spent.

I do not often agree with a columnist by the name of Thomas Friedman, but he has a column today that I think everyone in our collective body should read. It is aptly titled "Still Digging." Here, he writes: Given where we need to go, this tax deal—this tax deal, opportunity scholarship deal, unemployment deal, tax holiday deal—is just another shot of morphine to a country that needs to do things that are big and hard and still only wants to do things that are easy and small. He concludes: Economics is not war. It can be win-