

with food, clothing, and other necessities; and together it means the youngsters—primarily young women—who are going to be in these shelters will know from the time they get to the shelter that caring individuals want them to have a different life.

That is what drew me to this legislation. When you are talking about preying on young people, every Member of the Senate is concerned. What I think galvanized my attention was that a lot of these young women don't think anybody cares about them except their pimp. They have gotten to the point in life where they believe there isn't anybody in their corner.

Their pimp says: You know, sweetheart, I care about you. You are what's really important to me. Let's just make some money, and eventually you will be out on your own.

What you have with these shelters, and also the law enforcement people I saw in Portland, is young women saying for the first time that there is an adult, a role model, who wants them to have a different life, who wants them to have the prospect of a different future, where they are not degrading themselves, where they are not victimized, where they have a different set of possibilities for their lives.

The human services aspects of this legislation are extremely important, and they complement the help that law enforcement would get as well. I was particularly struck, as we got into the law enforcement aspect of this fight against sex trafficking, that there, again, had been some model approaches. The law enforcement official I was particularly impressed with was the Dallas, TX, police sergeant Byron Fassett. He explained to me that without the right training, law enforcement officers would not know how to spot the signs of sex trafficking and would not know how to handle the victims.

So Senator CORNYN and I thought, with the counsel of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle, it would be important to provide specialized training for police officers and prosecutors to help them understand how to handle sex trafficking cases. The fact is, Sergeant Fassett of Dallas, TX, can only be at one place at a time.

What this legislation is going to do is make it possible for other leaders in the law enforcement field to get the training out across the country, the state-of-the-art approaches about how to best fight the violent criminals who engaged in this activity, and I am very pleased that we were able to make possible part of the grant in this legislation assistance for the law enforcement community.

Finally, the bill would address another issue that is a major component of sex trafficking, and that is runaway children. One-third of runaway children are lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving their home. The evidence also shows that the children who have run away multiple times are at the greatest risk of being drawn into sex trafficking.

So what we are doing in this legislation is making it possible for law enforcement officials to, in effect, make priority the children at greatest risk; that is, these runaways. I am very pleased we were able to work out a bipartisan agreement for our approach in this area.

It would be hard to give appropriate thanks to all who participated in this effort—certainly, to do it without keeping you here until breakfast time. Let me name just a small number of the many groups and individuals who provided extremely valuable insight: the Polaris Project, Shared Hope International, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the FBI's Innocence Lost Project, and ECPAT-USA. I could go on with the list of many groups.

Mr. President, I will tell you I am especially grateful to the faith community for all of their efforts. Throughout this debate, Senator CORNYN and I have been contacted by religious leaders from all over the country, from all particular denominations, talking about how important this legislation is to them; and what they conveyed to us is that this is what they see in their congregations. This is what parents go to bed at night worrying about—the prospect of seeing one of their youngsters caught up in this vicious cycle of degradation, crime, and lost hope for the future.

We could not be here tonight if it wasn't for the faith community that, all across the country, contacted their Senators, contacted various civic groups, and made common cause with rallies and marches and petitions. This is what has made this night possible.

So I have tried to make sure the Senate knows that a whole host of colleagues on both sides of the aisle have worked on this. I will say my older daughter said the other night: Dad, I have figured it out. You are in the only profession on Earth where somebody your age is considered one of the young guys. I thought about that, because I have had the honor of serving in the Senate for some time—recently was re-elected—and I can't recall a time when I felt prouder of the Senate coming together to deal with something that would make a real difference.

This one piece of legislation is not going to wipe out this reprehensible, heinous crime, where youngsters who are 12 and 13 and 14 are trafficked for sex. But with this legislation, from Portland, OR, to Portland, ME—and, frankly, this will have benefits internationally because a lot of these youngsters are also trafficked for sex far from the shores of the United States—tonight the Senate is making a difference. Tonight, the Senate is giving hope to parents who are concerned about their kids' future. For young women who are literally going to be hiding tonight near some of these interstates—Interstate 5, which goes all through the West—with the passage of this legislation and, hopefully, quick

action by the House, this is a chance to make a difference for these young people.

This is what public service is supposed to be all about—making a difference for young people and families and doing it not on the basis of Democrats and Republicans but on the basis of what is right, what is moral, what is just. There are a lot of people who deserve credit here tonight, especially my friend and colleague, Senator CORNYN, but I am very hopeful the House will act on this legislation. I am going to put additional remarks into the RECORD, but Joel Shapiro, of my office, did yeoman's work on this legislation and deserves considerable credit tonight. I will leave my additional remarks for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, but tonight, through the good-faith efforts of lots of community and faith leaders, there is an opportunity to help reduce one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in our country—certainly one of the most immoral—the trafficking of young people for sex.

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

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

AIRPORT AND AIRWAY EXTENSION ACT OF 2010—Resumed

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 4727 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 4728 (to amendment No. 4727), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 4729, to provide for a study.

Reid amendment No. 4730 (the instructions) (to amendment No. 4729), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 4731 (to amendment No. 4730), of a perfecting nature.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, what is the pending business before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the motion to concur—

Mr. REID. The message to accompany H.R. 4853.

Mr. President, I move to table my motion and ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Delaware (Mr.

COONS), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) are necessarily absent.

Mr. KYL. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG), the Senator from Florida (Mr. LEMIEUX), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 65, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 271 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Akaka	Franken	Mikulski
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baucus	Grassley	Murray
Bennet	Hagan	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Hatch	Pryor
Bingaman	Inouye	Reed
Bond	Isakson	Reid
Brown (MA)	Johanns	Risch
Cantwell	Kerry	Roberts
Cardin	Kirk	Rockefeller
Carper	Klobuchar	Schumer
Casey	Kohl	Sessions
Chambliss	Lautenberg	Shaheen
Coburn	Leahy	Shelby
Cochran	Levin	Snowe
Collins	Lieberman	Specter
Conrad	Lincoln	Stabenow
Corker	Lugar	Thune
Dorgan	Manchin	Whitehouse
Durbin	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McCaskill	Wyden
Feinstein	McConnell	

NAYS—11

Brown (OH)	Landrieu	Udall (CO)
DeMint	Menendez	Udall (NM)
Ensign	Merkley	Voinovich
Harkin	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—24

Alexander	Cornyn	Johnson
Bayh	Crapo	Kyl
Begich	Dodd	LeMieux
Boxer	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Brownback	Graham	Tester
Bunning	Gregg	Vitter
Burr	Hutchison	Warner
Coons	Inhofe	Webb

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 4853 with the Reid for Baucus amendment No. 4727.

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

Mr. REID. 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

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

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

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4753

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 4853 with the Reid-McConnell amendment No. 4753 and that the amendment be considered read.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment No. 4753 to H.R. 4853.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4754 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4753

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 4754 to amendment No. 4753.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

At the end insert the following: "The provisions of this Act shall become effective in 5 days upon enactment."

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 4853, the Middle Class Tax Relief Act, with an amendment No. 4753.

Max Baucus, Joseph I. Lieberman, John D. Rockefeller IV, Byron L. Dorgan, John F. Kerry, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark L. Pryor, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Richard J. Durbin, Mark R. Warner, Jeanne Shaheen, Ben Nelson, Evan Bayh, Christopher J. Dodd, Kent Conrad, Jim Webb, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4755

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to refer the House message to the Finance

Committee with instructions to report back forthwith, with the following amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to refer the House message to the Senate Committee on Finance with instructions to report back forthwith, with an amendment numbered 4755.

The amendment (No. 4755) is as follows:

At the end, add the following: "The Senate Finance Committee is requested to study the impact of any delay in extending tax cuts to middle income Americans with incomes up to \$250,000."

Mr. REID. On that I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4756

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to my instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 4756 to the instructions to the motion to refer H.R. 4853.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, insert the following: "including specific information on the impact of the delay in extending the tax cuts."

Mr. REID. On that I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4757 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4756

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment to my instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 4757 to amendment No. 4756.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, insert the following: "and include statistics which reflect regional differences."

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote occur on Monday, December 13, at 3 p.m., with the mandatory quorum being waived.

Before the Chair rules on this, there are some people who need the ability—anyway, there is no need to go into detail, but for those people who can't get here on time, if people can't get back until 5:30, it would be our normal vote. We are not going to cut anyone off at an unreasonable time. There will be plenty of time for people to vote, within reason.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as I think almost everyone knows, President Obama and the Republican leaders have reached an agreement on taxes. It is, in my view, a bad deal, and I think we can do a lot better. Tonight, I wish to speak briefly, and I think I will have some other Senators join me. Tomorrow, I intend to be back to speak a lot longer about this issue because I think this is an issue the American people want serious discussion about.

I can tell my colleagues that representing the small State of Vermont, we have received in the last 3 days thousands—thousands—of phone calls from my State and from other States, and what I will tell my colleagues is that 99 percent of those calls were against this agreement. What I wish to do tonight, briefly, and at greater length tomorrow, is to tell my colleagues why I vigorously oppose the deal that has been cut and how we have to move in a very different way if we are going to save the disappearing middle class of our country.

In my view, the American people are against this agreement. They want to hear Members of the Senate speak out against this agreement, and that is what I will do this evening.

Let me explain, very briefly, why I am opposing the agreement reached by the Republican leadership and President Obama. First, at a time when our country has a recordbreaking \$13.8 trillion national debt and a collapsing middle class, it is unconscionable to me that we could support an agreement that drives up our national debt because we have given huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires who don't need it. Here is an interesting irony: In many cases, they are telling us they don't even want it. Two of the richest people in the world, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, have said: Thank you. We don't need this tax break.

This country has serious problems. Use the money on those problems, not giving billionaires a tax break.

In my own State, the founder of Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Ben Cohen, said: Yes, I would like a tax break, but I don't need it. You know what.

There are millionaires all over this country who are saying the same thing.

We have been told that the extension of the tax breaks for the rich will go on for only 2 years. The Bush tax breaks for the rich will go on for 2 years. Maybe that is the case, but I personally don't believe that. I believe that given the political reality that exists in Washington, my guess is that 2 years from now, when this same debate happens again, these tax breaks for the rich will once again be extended. Our Republican colleagues have been very clear they wanted a 10-year extension. It is hard for me to believe that 2 years from now they are going to say: Oh, 2 years, that is fine. That is enough. We give up. I don't think so.

The difficulty is, we have a President who campaigned vigorously against extending these tax breaks for the rich, but those tax breaks for the rich are in this agreement. So my fear is that if the President is the Democratic nominee 2 years from now and he says: Trust me, we are going to stop these tax breaks for the rich, I think his credibility might not be too high.

So my fear is, in fact, if these Bush tax cuts for the top 2 percent, many of whom are millionaires and billionaires, are extended over a 10-year period, we are looking at a \$700 billion increase in the national debt.

Secondly, extending income tax breaks for the top 2 percent is not the only unfair tax proposal in this agreement. This agreement struck by the President and the Republican leadership continues the Bush-era 15-percent tax rate on capital gains and dividends, meaning that those people who make their living off their investments will continue to pay a substantially lower tax rate than the vast majority of the people in the middle class—people such as firemen, teachers, and nurses.

On top of all that, this agreement includes a horrendous proposal regarding the estate tax, a Teddy Roosevelt initiative which was enacted in 1916. It will be celebrating its 100th birthday in a few years. Under the agreement we will be debating here, the estate tax rate, which was 55 percent under President Clinton, will decline to 35 percent under this agreement, with an exemption on the first \$5 million of an individual's estate, \$10 million for couples.

I suspect there are people who are watching this evening and they are saying: Oh, my goodness. I don't want to pay a 55-percent estate tax. So let me be very clear in saying this, in telling you something the Republicans do not tell you: that the estate tax applies only to the top three-tenths of 1 percent, so 99.7 percent of American families do not pay 5 cents in the estate tax. So this is not just a tax for the rich; this is a tax for the very rich.

I know many of my Republican colleagues would like to abolish, repeal the estate tax altogether, and that would cost us \$1 trillion over 10 years to our national debt, but they are making significant progress by lowering the rate to 35 percent.

Does my colleague from Ohio wish to respond?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I thank the Senator for yielding. I hear what the Senator says about the tax burden in this country; that it falls predominantly on the middle class. When I hear him talk about the estate tax, couples pay no estate tax on the first \$10 million of their assets after they both die. Considering they shelter a good bit beyond that, then the tax rate only on the dollars above \$10 million were lowered significantly in this proposal—and then what has happened with extending the tax cuts.

I was intrigued, I guess it was yesterday, when the Senator offered a motion

on the floor. In light of the fact that a relatively small group of people are getting huge tax cuts—millionaires and billionaires—whether it is the estate tax upon their death that their heirs enjoy this huge tax break or whether it is when earning \$1 million or \$2 million or \$5 million a year and getting a huge tax cut, the motion yesterday simply said, if I recall, that every Social Security beneficiary—and that is tens of millions—

Mr. SANDERS. Over 50 million.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Fifty million people would get a check for \$250 from the government, because, I believe, about \$13 billion for 1 year, it wouldn't have been a long-term deficit issue; it would have been a one-time cost for people who didn't get a cost-of-living adjustment this year. So we know the average Social Security beneficiary gets about \$14,000 a year. We know an awful lot of Social Security beneficiaries live mostly on their Social Security. Most people have a little bit more than that, but an awful lot have only a little bit more or nothing more so that is what they live on. They have no cost-of-living adjustment this year because of this sort of complicated formula.

But what was pretty amazing to me is how at the same time, every Republican signed a letter, 42 Republican Senators signed a letter saying they will do nothing else until they get their tax cuts for the rich. It is almost like a work stoppage. It is almost like the Republican Senators are on strike, saying: We are not going to vote or we are not going to do anything around here. We are not going to work or vote yes on anything around here until you give my people a tax cut, my wealthy friends and contributors in my States.

So the contrast of their saying we will not do anything for anybody else except millionaires and billionaires, we will not—even a \$250 check, since there was no cost-of-living adjustment to seniors who are making about \$14,000 a year from Social Security.

What that check would mean to them is—I think that contrast made was so important to understand. Give us some more about what that contrast means with those Social Security beneficiaries.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Senator for his very strong ethics in trying to get that \$250 emergency check out to senior citizens on Social Security and disabled vets—over 15 million people.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. One more point. A majority of Senators voted for it.

Mr. SANDERS. Yes, 53.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. It was filibustered again, blocked by a minority of Senators, right?

Mr. SANDERS. Absolutely. We won 53 to 45, but around here the majority does not rule. The Republicans filibustered, as they almost always do on anything of substance, and we could not get the 60 votes because we did not get one Republican vote.

The point the Senator was making gets to the heart of this entire issue, which is that our friends over there are fighting vigorously for \$700 billion in tax breaks for the top 2 percent—\$70 billion a year for the richest people in this country. And when we say to them that senior citizens and disabled vets who are living on \$14,000 or \$15,000 a year need a check of \$250, oh, we can't afford that. But we can afford to give a billionaire a \$1 million tax break.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. That \$750 billion is \$75 billion a year for 10 years for millionaires and billionaires versus \$13 billion once for senior citizens. In essence, that \$750 billion—without getting too much into the weeds on numbers—in essence, we are borrowing that money from China, charging it to our children and grandchildren, putting it on their credit cards. They will pay it off who knows when. Then we are giving that \$750 billion to people who are fabulously wealthy already, right? But they are unwilling to move forward on unemployment benefits or on your proposal to help a senior with \$250 because they really are on strike.

They say: We are not doing anything until you give tax cuts to the rich, to my people.

Mr. SANDERS. That is right. Most of us—I am sure Senator BROWN has received a lot of calls from people in Ohio—I know seniors who are hanging on by their fingernails, trying to pay their bills, heat their homes, pay prescription drug costs, and take care of their health care needs. And \$250 will not profoundly impact people's lives, but it will help a little bit. These guys say: Sorry, we can't afford a \$250 check for a senior or a disabled vet because that would cost \$13 billion or \$14 billion a year. But we can afford \$70 billion a year to go to the top 2 percent.

Frankly, I think that is what this whole debate is about. That is what it is about.

What I want to do is continue for a moment on some of the other objections. Senator BROWN made an excellent point in contrasting the priorities we are seeing in the Senate, especially from our Republican friends. We didn't get one vote—not one—for a \$250 check for seniors or disabled vets. I want to continue with some of the problems that I see in this agreement struck by the President and the Republican leadership.

Some folks may have heard a bit about the so-called payroll tax holiday. What that would do is cut about \$120 billion in Social Security payroll taxes for workers.

On the surface, this sounds like a great idea. Instead of paying 6.2 percent, they will be paying 4.2 percent. They might think: Hey, that is great. I am paying less in taxes. My paycheck is a bit bigger. It is a great idea.

Well, let's stop for a minute and ask: Where did this idea originally come from? Well, the truth is this payroll tax holiday originated from conservative Republicans whose ultimate goal is the destruction of Social Security.

What does that mean? Well, it is not very hard to figure out. If you are substantially cutting the amount of money that goes into Social Security by cutting back on the payroll tax, that makes Social Security less financially viable. Today, Social Security can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 29 years. Those of us who believe strongly in Social Security—that it has worked extraordinarily well for the last 75 years—and want to see it work well for the next 75 years, we want to strengthen it.

I know the occupant of the Chair, the Senator from Oregon, has ideas about putting increased revenue into the Social Security trust funds. Those are the ideas we should be looking at, not cutting funding that goes into that trust fund. Furthermore, while this payroll tax holiday is a 1-year provision, and this agreement says the money will be covered, for the very first time, by Federal dollars from the Treasury going into the Social Security trust fund, which historically has gotten all of its money from the payroll tax—while the proponents of this agreement say don't worry about it, it is a 1-year agreement, I make the same argument on this point that I made on the other. A year from now, people will be discussing whether we extend that payroll tax holiday. While those of us will say Social Security needs that money and you can't expend it, our Republican friends will say you are raising taxes on workers, and you can't do that. Then what we would be talking about over a period of years is less money going into Social Security, making it less financially solvent, which is exactly what many Republicans want to do. I think that is a bad idea.

I will tell you, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, which is led by a woman named Barbara Kennelly, who used to be in the House—I know Barbara very well—says this about that provision:

Even though Social Security contributed nothing to the current economic crisis, it has been bartered in a deal that provides deficit busting tax cuts for the wealthy. Diverting \$120 billion in Social Security contributions for a so-called "tax holiday" may sound like a good idea for workers now, but it is bad business for the program that a majority of middle-class seniors will rely upon in the future.

Conservatives have long dreamed of a payroll tax holiday because it fulfills two ideological goals, lower taxes and weakening Social Security finances. The White House claims the 2 percent payroll tax cut won't impact Social Security; however, we disagree.

There's no such thing as a "temporary" tax cut.

And the fear right here is that cut will, in fact, go on indefinitely.

Mr. President, I talked about the payroll tax for a moment. Let me talk about another aspect of the agreement the President signed with Republicans; that is, while some of the business tax cuts in this agreement may work well to create jobs and some may not,

economists on both ends of the political spectrum believe the better way to spur the economy and create jobs is to spend money rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure.

With corporate America already sitting on close to \$2 trillion in cash on hand, the problem we are seeing in our economy today is not that large corporations are taxed too highly, it is that the middle class doesn't have enough money to purchase their goods. Creating decent-paying jobs and rebuilding our infrastructure could seriously address that problem.

What we have right now, as I think you know, Mr. President, is an infrastructure that is crumbling. There are very credible estimates out there that we need to invest, in the next 5 years, several trillion dollars in rebuilding our roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, our mass transportation, our railroads. China is exploding with high-speed rail. We do not have any significant high-speed rail in this country. If we are serious about creating jobs, in my view, the most effective way to do that is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, which makes our entire country stronger, more competitive and, at the same time, short term it gives us the best bang we can get for the buck in terms of job creation. That is another issue.

Tax breaks for businesses may work; maybe they won't. But I don't think that type of investment is anywhere near as effective in terms of job creation as investing in the infrastructure.

The fifth point I want to make on why I think this agreement is not a good one: One of the positive aspects of the agreement—one that I certainly support, and I know you do, Mr. President—is the need to extend unemployment benefits for millions of workers today who face the possibility that within a few weeks those extended unemployment benefits may end. These are workers who are experiencing extraordinarily difficult times through no fault of their own, often caught up in the Wall Street crisis, but they have lost their jobs.

In various parts of this country it is awfully hard to get a job. More and more people are applying for jobs, and the jobs are not there. We have the moral responsibility to extend unemployment benefits and allow those working families the opportunity to pay their bills and give them at least a modicum of security.

Here is the point I want to make. I strongly, absolutely believe any agreement has to have an extension of unemployment benefits for at least 13 months, maybe longer. But when folks who support this agreement say we want a great compromise, we managed to get an extension of unemployment benefits there, what I would say is that for the past 40 years, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, whenever the unemployment rate has been above 7.2 percent—now we are

looking at 9.8 percent—unemployment insurance has always been extended.

So this great compromise is simply doing what we have already been doing as a matter of costs for the last 40 years, when Republicans ran the Senate and when Democrats ran the Senate, with Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents. There was a consensus that we cannot leave fellow Americans high and dry when unemployment is high. Well, unemployment today is very high. In my view, this is not a great compromise. This is simply doing what this country has done under both Democrats and Republicans for 40 years.

Mr. President, I have been mentioning my concerns about this agreement, but let me also say, absolutely, there are positive elements to this agreement. I don't want to suggest for a moment there are not. Extending middle-class tax cuts for 98 percent of Americans is something that must be done, absolutely.

As you know, during the Bush years, median family income declined by over \$2,000. What we are seeing in many parts of this country is that wages are actually going down, not up. People are working longer hours for lower wages.

Does the middle class of this country need to continue to have that tax break? Of course they do. I will fight as hard as I can to make sure they do. So this proposal is, in fact, an important proposal. There are other good proposals in it. The earned-income tax credit for working Americans is very important. The child and college tax credits are also very important. These proposals will keep millions of Americans from slipping out of the middle class and into poverty, and they will allow millions more to send their kids to college.

But when we look at the overall package, we must put it in a broader context. What will the message of this legislation mean for the future of our country? And I think one point that has to be made is that if we pass this agreement as written, it says we are going to continue the Bush policy of trickle-down economics for at least 2 more years. To my mind, that is absurd. This is a policy—based on all of the evidence—that grotesquely failed. After 8 years of Bush-style economics, with all of these tax breaks for the rich, we ended up losing 500,000 private sector jobs—not a very impressive record. In fact, it is about the worst record in job creation in modern history.

Here is another concern that I have that I think folks are not talking about enough. This is what I believe will happen right after this agreement is passed. And I am going to do everything I can to see that it is not passed, and I hope very much that it is not passed, but if it is passed, no one should have any illusions that our Republican friends will not be back in a month or two saying the following: Gee, our national debt is getting close

to \$14 trillion, we have a \$1.4 trillion deficit, and, you know what, we are going to have to cut. We are going to have to cut and cut and cut. Nobody should have any illusion that in 2 months there will not be ferocious debates on the floor of the Senate on the part of people who want to cut Social Security, who want to cut Medicare, who want to cut Medicaid, who want to cut childcare and education in general and environmental protection. Tax breaks for billionaires is good, but cutting back on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid is also what they want to do.

I think Senator SHERROD BROWN, a moment ago, just crystallized that. That is what it is about. We can afford to give \$70 billion a year to the top 2 percent, the wealthiest people, but we can't afford to spend \$14 billion a year to make sure senior citizens and disabled vets get a \$250 check. That is what this whole thing is going to be about—tax breaks for the rich and cutbacks on all of the programs the middle-class and working families of this country desperately need.

Mr. President, I will be back tomorrow because there is a lot more that has to be said on this issue, but let me conclude by saying I will give credit to my Republican colleagues in that they have been pretty honest and straightforward about what they intend to do. There is nothing mysterious about it. What they want to do is to take this country back to the 1920s. They want to take us back to the days where, when you were old, there was no Social Security and you had to fend for yourself in the waning years of your life when you couldn't work. They want to ultimately destroy Medicare.

I would suggest to all of the senior citizens in this country—the people who are 70, 75, 80; people who are maybe struggling with one illness or another—good luck in going to a private insurance company to get help when you are low-income and sick. It ain't gonna happen. They are not going to be there because they can't make any money off of you.

Those people are going to be out there on the street all alone because they are not going to be able to get the help they need if Medicare is destroyed, and the same thing with Medicaid.

You know, Mr. President, you and I heard in this Chamber the great debate over the death panels, the famous death panels that were included, supposedly, in the health care reform bill we passed. Well, it turns out that death panels are, in fact, now arising in America but not because of the health care reform passed here in Washington.

In Arizona, right now the Governor there apparently is deciding they do not have the money in their Medicaid Program to provide transplants to people who, without those transplants, will die. That is called a death panel. If you are poor and you need a transplant and you are living in Arizona, good luck to you.

Let me conclude by simply saying that I believe very strongly that we can forge a much better agreement than the current one before us. I believe, in my State of Vermont and all over this country, that the vast majority of people do not think it makes any sense at all to give hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country so that we can drive up the national debt and have our kids and grandchildren pay higher taxes in order to pay off that debt. That doesn't make sense to progressives like me, and it doesn't make sense to conservatives out there.

So I think the American people are on our side—at least the side that opposes this agreement. Our job here—I know it is a shocking idea—is to represent the middle-class and working families, not just millionaires and billionaires.

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 legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to share some of my concerns about the package that has been negotiated between the President and the Republicans and has now been presented here on the floor of the Senate.

First, I wish to emphasize the size of the decision that is going to be made in the next couple of days. This deficit spending stimulus package is a \$1 trillion package. Let's turn the clock back to the debate over the stimulus package we had in 2009. That stimulus was about \$800 billion—only 80 percent of the size of this package. That stimulus had in it direct construction jobs across America. Every community, every county benefited from an increase in production. It also had the making work pay tax deduction. It had a host of small business tax deductions, and it had direct assistance to our States to enable them to meet some of the crises they were experiencing in health care and in education, so we could keep our schools across America open during this great Bush recession.

I have listened over the last year and a half to tremendous attacks on that stimulus package. Yet this is a much larger decision. This is a \$1 trillion decision, and it is a package that much less thought has gone into. We have this package here on the floor, but we haven't actually gotten the paper in our hands as to what is in it. We have to rely on newspaper accounts as to what is going to be in it.

Tonight, in offices across this Nation, folks are trying to get it off the Internet, and they are going to be trying to analyze it and understand it. We

know the basic outlines, and the basic outlines raise a significant number of concerns. I encourage our citizens to look at this package over the weekend and to share their concerns with their Congressmen and Congresswomen and certainly with their Senators.

This is a \$1 trillion deficit. There has been a lot of talk on the floor not only about the stimulus last year but about the size of our national debt. This is a \$1 trillion increase in our national debt. I would think that is something we would be tearing apart and looking at every part of it and asking if each dollar is being spent to the maximum effect. We should have amendments that say: Hey, we can create a lot more jobs if we spend these few million dollars over here rather than here, so that every dollar makes a maximum impact in putting America back to work. But not a single amendment is going to be allowed on this bill, as far as we are aware tonight. I believe that in a decision of this magnitude, there should be amendments that compare the effect of spending money here versus there and about what is going to have the greatest impact in a favorable way for America.

My good colleague from Vermont pointed out that this reduces the flow of resources into Social Security. I think we should have an extensive debate about coming to rely on the general fund, which is what the administration wants to do. They are going to substitute payroll revenue for general fund revenue. I think we should have a substantial debate about depending upon general revenue to supply funds to the Social Security fund.

Let me explain this. The approximately \$120 billion that will flow into Social Security from the general fund under this program comes from borrowed funds. Those borrowed funds come primarily from China. So Social Security—a program for Americans in which we save our own money and invest that money so there can be a very modest steady income in the retirement years—now is going to rely upon borrowed funds from China. That is the American retirement plan? We should be debating that on the floor of the Senate, and it should be an extensive debate, not a debate in which cloture is going to be rushed on Monday and then have 30 hours split among 100 Members, because we are spending \$1 trillion of deficit money under this plan.

My first main concern is that we are taking a step to greatly increase the national debt with this plan. My second concern is this plan 100 percent endorses the Bush tax structure that has so deeply damaged our Nation. Many of you will recall that when the economy grew under President Bush II, the living wages of working Americans actually failed to increase. The economy grew but the wages didn't grow for working Americans. In addition, we doubled our national debt.

That is what happens when we say we are going to create a plan that gives

away our national treasure to the most affluent. We are going to do so in a manner that doesn't create living wage jobs, doesn't reward the productivity of American workers.

I am going to tell you that we made a major decision in about 1974, about the year I graduated from high school, and that was to adopt strategies, which failed, to link the productivity of American workers to their compensation. Up until that point in the postwar era, as our productivity as a nation grew, the financial success of our working families grew along with that increase in productivity. But since 1974, the tremendous, spectacular increase in the productivity and national wealth of our Nation has not been shared with the workers of our Nation. Is that the type of America we want, where many work to make this Nation a success and do not share in the reward? The Bush tax cut structure is the ultimate embodiment of that philosophy of carving off the national treasure for the very few.

I do not think our success as a nation should be measured by the success of our wealthiest families. I applaud them for their entrepreneurship. I applaud them when the strategies to create companies succeed. But it is up to us to create a structure that says, as the work product increases we are going to enable all families to thrive—not for a few to thrive spectacularly while everyone else stays on a level plain.

Back in my home community, the community in which I grew up, a working class community of three-bedroom ranch houses, so many children now consider it a success if they can simply afford to purchase their parents' home because it is only their parents' home, with the assistance from their parents, that they can afford on a working American family's salary because while the worker's share of the national income has not increased with productivity, housing prices have gone up enormously, making it harder and harder for a working family to afford a home.

Embodied in these Bush breaks that have so deeply damaged our Nation we have a very interesting feature, and that is that under this plan President Obama has proposed with the Republicans—it says we are going to extend breaks not just so the wealthiest can enjoy the same breaks on their first \$1 million that others receive for the money they are earning up to \$1 million, but bonus breaks on top of that.

Let me give you a sense of that. The amount of the tax break that is given to everyone who earns their first \$1 million is about \$43,000. Let's round it off: \$40,000. Under this plan, those families earning over \$1 million receive an average of an additional bonus of \$100,000 per taxpayer, a \$100,000 bonus to the most successful families in the country. That is pretty generous. That is enormously generous. Are we going to be generous with our working families? Unfortunately, no. Under this

plan a family earning in the vicinity of \$40,000 to \$50,000 gets about \$1,700. A family that earns \$40,000 or less gets somewhere in the nature of \$1,000. So \$1,000 for a working family versus \$43,000 plus a \$100,000 bonus for our wealthiest families in America.

Let's see, \$1,000; \$143,000. There is very little to those who are building the success and wealth of our Nation through the productivity of our workmanship, and a whole lot to those who are spectacularly wealthy already.

The structure of the capital gains tax under this proposal and the structure of the estate tax add to the impact of the income tax brackets I was just describing. If you add it all up, and if you have been spectacularly successful through this recession, then you can count on a whole lot of help, generous gifts from Uncle Sam. If you have been struggling and you are earning near minimum wage, or maybe you are working 60 hours a week, three jobs, each 20 hours earning a minimum wage, you get about \$1,000 under this plan. That sort of reinforcement of the fundamental disparity between working families and those who are best off is not healthy for America. That does not build the financial foundation so families can afford to give their children substantial opportunities.

The America in which I grew up, the vision of my father and mother's generation was that we would have an America with opportunity for every family. We are leaving that vision behind with this bill.

Let me turn to my next main concern. The \$1 trillion package is designed to be a stimulus. But has it been designed well, to spend every tax dollar in a smart way? There are many folks in this Chamber who say they are fiscal conservatives. I am a fiscal conservative because I believe every dollar needs to be spent in a smart way. Let's test this.

Parts of this package get an A, and parts of this package get an F. The part that gets an A is unemployment insurance. This is important and fundamental to our families. We have always had the philosophy that when there are no jobs to be had, when people cannot get a job through no fault of their own, we are going to extend unemployment benefits to help families through that rough time. We have always done it, Democrats and Republicans, until this year when our Republicans have turned their backs on working families and said: Not now. We will not support extending support unless we take it away from some other important part of the budget. But, they said, we will support \$100,000 bonuses without taking anything away from anyone else.

That unity of support for our working families during hard times disappeared this year. That is too bad. That is a tragedy.

The fundamental premise has been, by my colleagues across the aisle: We are going to hold those families hostage to get a \$100,000 bonus on top of a

very generous basic tax break for the wealthiest, hold working families hostage for a lot of help for the very few at the very top. Those bonus tax breaks are rated dead last by the Congressional Budget Office in creating jobs in this Nation. Unemployment assistance is rated at the top, the most effective way of creating jobs in this Nation—and it should be in any package. It should be extended and has been extended in a bipartisan manner in the past until this year when, unfortunately, it seems that my colleagues across the aisle became all about the few and not about helping families when there are no jobs.

There is great irony in this because we don't have jobs in this Nation because of the great Bush recession created by my friends across the aisle. First of all, they deregulated the retail mortgages, and they allowed predatory loans. Those predatory loans meant, according to the Wall Street Journal, 60 percent of the families in America who qualified for a basic, amortizing, inexpensive, prime mortgage were steered into subprime mortgages. Then my good friends said: Let's let Wall Street do whatever it wants in packaging these mortgages. Let's end the oversight and let's end the caps on leverage. So they created securities; that is, packages of mortgages. And they sold the rights to those packages. Those securities were doomed to blow up when the predatory features of the mortgages kicked in after 2 years and interest rates jumped from 4.5 percent to 9 percent.

We have been dealing, since I came into office in the Senate, with the tremendous economic bomb produced by the Bush policies, the great Bush recession that created the unemployment so that people cannot get jobs. Now the same folks who created that disaster are saying: We are not going to help those who are being hurt by the disaster we created. It is like setting your house on fire and then cutting off the water to the fire hose.

If my Republican friends are so determined to adopt the very worst job-creating strategy, we should take it out of this bill, or at least have a debate on this floor of the Senate about whether we put it in the worst strategy or move those funds over here to the best strategy or to some other good job-creating strategy. Maybe all the features don't need to be As or A-pluses. But we have the Republican F plan because it is the worst as rated by the CBO. We have the Democratic A plan, support for the uninsured—it should be in here.

What about some of the other things? One of the very best ways to get our country going is low-cost loans to create energy-saving renovations in homes and buildings. It creates a tremendous number of jobs for dollars spent because it is a low-cost jobs program, not a grant program. It is ranked very high in the number of jobs it creates. We have a construction industry in this country that would love

to go to work, and we have three bills sitting here before the Senate.

We have the HOME Star bill for families to do energy saving renovations to their home. We have the Building Star bill to allow commercial buildings, office suites, industrial site buildings to be improved in energy renovation. The loans are paid back through the energy savings. So it creates a long-term positive in terms of the energy strategy of this Nation. It works very well for the families, very well for the businesses, and puts the construction industry back to work. That is the type of program we should be weighing against the F plan—that is from A to F, F for last, F for failure, F in CBO's analysis for the worst job-creating plan, which is what the Republicans have forced into this package.

Without amendments to this package, we cannot have that debate. There is a tradition of saying the Senate is the world's greatest deliberative body. Don't we have to have amendments to do that? Don't we have to have a debate on where to put different pieces of this puzzle to do that? I have been advocating for a guaranteed way to make sure the minority and the majority get to have amendments on this floor.

I happen to be a member of the majority right now, but I will be a member of the minority down the road—if I am here long enough, and I guess that is a big if—because the pendulum swings back and forth. But to be accountable before the people of this Nation, amendments have to be offered and debate has to be held and votes have to be taken and that is not being done on this bill as far as we know.

I know there is a possibility. I praise leaders of both sides in advance if they work out a deal that everyone can offer their amendments, or even a modest number of amendments on both sides.

Because that is the way it should be on the floor. That is what I have been advocating, that we have regular order that allows amendments. But I am afraid that Monday will come, that a deal will not get worked out, and we will not have the ability to have that debate, will not have the ability to be transparent before the American people in where we stand.

My good colleague from Vermont has shared a concern I also share; that is, the payroll tax being cut off, snuffed out as a supply of Social Security, that our retirement plan that we pay for ourselves is being changed to a retirement plan financed by China.

So the national debt, \$1 trillion—that is a concern. The structure of the Bush tax breaks that so deeply damaged our Nation over the last decade being extended into the next decade is a major concern, as is the poor design of the stimulus where every dollar has not been tested against its ability to create jobs at a time we desperately need jobs, and the change in our funding of Social Security, and it is dependent upon Chinese funds. Those items need to be debated. They are profound concerns.

Maybe there are answers that make sense. I look forward to hearing such answers, if they exist. I would like to see those answers tested through amendments offered on this floor.

I have an amendment I would like to see offered on the floor. I have an amendment that says: Take the \$100,000 bonus breaks for the wealthiest 2 percent and instead dedicate that to Social Security. Let's make sure our seniors who need basic support in their retirement are well-secured before handing out \$100,000 bonus breaks to the very few. Well, I do not know if that would pass on this floor. I do not know where people would stand. But I know people should have to declare where they stand so the voters can decide if they like it or not, so the voters can call and say: We would encourage you to vote this way or that way.

The other thing I like about that particular approach is it says: If we are going to reduce the payroll tax in the short term to create jobs, we are going to do something else to make sure our Social Security does not depend on funds from China. I would like to see that debate.

I would like to see the energy tax credits debated. They are not in this package as of now, as far as we know. Energy tax credits pay us back in a number of ways. The first is that currently we import a tremendous amount of oil from the Middle East and from Venezuela, from Nigeria, from places that do not necessarily share our national outlook. A lot of that money ends up in the hands of terrorist organizations.

Military security analysts now say this is the first set of wars we are in right now—the first wars in which we are funding both sides. And how are we doing that? Through our energy policies which send funds to countries that then pass on funds to terrorists. That is not smart. It makes more sense to free our energy here at home.

I will tell you something else. In addition to increasing our national security and spending those dollars here at home on energy we create ourselves, red, white, and blue American energy, that keeps those dollars here in our communities, and when those dollars stay in our communities, they create jobs in our communities. It means families get jobs, and they spend the money from those jobs in these communities. So it cycles through into the retail stores, into the grocery markets, keeping those dollars here creating jobs rather than shipping them overseas for oil.

It does another thing as well; that is, it reduces our energy consumption from abroad, which largely means shifting from oil to clean sources. And those clean sources will put less carbon dioxide in the air. That means we do a much better job being good stewards of our planet.

So energy tax credits encourage clean energy, keep jobs here, improving our national security and being

good stewards of the planet. Why don't we have that debate on the floor of this Senate before we send this bill back to the House?

Another colleague has amendments that say: OK, we are going to vote on a trillion-dollar stimulus package that creates a trillion-dollar debt. Shouldn't we tie it to some kind of trigger for fiscal responsibility that will kick in maybe 24 months out so we do not head recklessly down a path into extraordinary debt that deeply damages our Nation even further?

So fiscal responsibility—tie some fiscal responsibility measures to this package. That is a good idea. I applaud my colleague from Oregon who has raised that idea, Senator WYDEN, who has done a lot of work on how we can create fiscal responsibility tied to a package going through now. It will say something to the international financiers that this short-term deficit spending is going to be marked by substantial fiscal discipline, and that in itself may serve other things, such as keeping the interest rate low that we pay, so fewer of our dollars go out in interest.

These ideas, these amendments deserve a debate on this major decision facing this body over the next few days.

I will close by saying that I am deeply concerned—deeply concerned—about the deficit and the debt. I am deeply concerned about the Bush tax breaks that have done so much damage and are being extended into the next decade. I am deeply concerned about the poor design of the stimulus, deeply concerned about Social Security being made dependent upon borrowing from China, deeply concerned that this package is being put together and may not have the opportunity to have the debate over elements that should be debated because if they do not stand up on the floor of the Senate in debate, they do not belong in this package.

So with that, I say to our friends across the Nation, you have a few days only to weigh in. Please do weigh in. Let us hear your voice. Let us consider your views. And let us fully deliberate on this package before we pass it.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

BYRON L. DORGAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in honoring the service of Senator BYRON DORGAN. Over his nearly 30 years in Congress, Senator DORGAN has been a strong and dedicated advocate for the people of the State of North Dakota.

Senator DORGAN's long career in public service began in 1969 when he was appointed North Dakota State Tax Commissioner. Assuming this position at the age of only 26, Senator DORGAN became the youngest constitutional officer in North Dakota's history.

Since 1980, Senator DORGAN has been a voice for the people of North Dakota

in Washington, DC. After serving six terms in the House of Representatives, he was first elected to the Senate in 1992.

It is clear that Senator DORGAN's upbringing in the small town of Regent, ND, has shaped his tenure in Congress. Throughout his years in Congress, Senator DORGAN has been a formidable advocate for rural America and the family farmers of his state. He led the effort to make permanent the disaster aid program, which provides an essential safety-net for farmers and ranchers affected by severe weather, in the 2008 farm bill.

Senator DORGAN also has been a great advocate for North Dakota's energy sector. As the country moves toward renewable and domestic energy sources, he has worked to put his state at the forefront of the industry.

After so many years of public service for the people of North Dakota, Senator DORGAN's time in the Senate is coming to a close. I am proud to have served with him, and I thank him for his service in the Senate. I wish Senator DORGAN and his family the best in the next chapters in their lives.

ROBERT F. BENNETT

Mr. President, I also join my colleagues in recognizing Senator ROBERT BENNETT of Utah.

I have had the privilege of working with Senator BENNETT since I entered the Senate in 1997, four years after Senator BENNETT began his Senate service. I have admired his enthusiasm and dedication to serving the people of Utah ever since.

It was clear that public service was in his blood. From his election as student body president at the University of Utah, to his time in the Utah Army National Guard, Senator BENNETT's priority for his entire adult life has been serving the people of his home State.

His first taste of real politics came in the 1960s when he helped his father Wallace Bennett win re-election to this very Chamber. And while he did not seek office himself until almost 20 years following his father's retirement, he worked in the private sector in Utah, deepening his ties to the State and his devotion to the people of Utah.

I have had the privilege of working side-by-side with Senator BENNETT on the Appropriations Committee for many years. I have seen his passion for service, his respect for the Senate, and above all else, his love of Utah.

He has managed to stay true to the fiscal principles that he gained as a businessman and CEO, while understanding the need for compromise when it was required of him for the sake of his State and the rest of America.

During his tenure here, Utah has become a premiere destination of the West—he has worked for quality education for Utah's children, fought to preserve its natural landscapes, and paved the way for the development of 21st century infrastructure back home.

Senator BENNETT also made America proud in 2002 when he helped the Salt

Lake City Winter Olympics become one of the most successful and safe Olympic games in recent memory.

Of course, Senator BENNETT and I have not always seen eye-to-eye on many issues. But my respect for his beliefs has always been deep. And in 2008, when America was on the brink of financial collapse, I was moved by his eagerness to reach across the aisle to do what was right for Utah and Illinois, alike. This has always been his character, and the Senate will miss him for it.

Senator BENNETT leaves us this month in the same way that he has served here for almost 20 years: with dignity and conviction. I am proud to call him a friend, and wish him and his family all the best in the future.

REMEMBERING CHARLES WHEELER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in solemn remembrance of a dear friend of mine from Ashland, KY, who passed away peacefully at his home this Veterans Day. Mr. Charles Wheeler was a consummate small businessman, local official, and advocate for higher education. I knew Charles for over 30 years, and I can tell you that the love he felt for his community in the Commonwealth was surpassed only by his affection for his beloved wife of 60 years, Mary Kathryn Wheeler.

Born in Paintsville, KY, Charles owned and operated a local hardware store in Boyd County for nearly 40 years—helping to build his community and assist all who met him, literally and figuratively. It is no wonder then, that Charles's friendly manner and smart tact got him elected as an Ashland city commissioner by the age of 28. Before long, his friends and neighbors elected him to represent them in the Kentucky General Assembly, where he served for 8 years.

My friend continued to serve his community by serving on the Morehead State University Board of Regents for a decade during a period when that institution saw great growth. His pursuit of excellence in higher education undoubtedly changed the lives of countless students.

I could surely continue to draw to mind the instances when Charles helped meet the need of his community, and this Senator, but I would simply ask that my colleagues join me in remembering the life of a humble man who showed incredible character throughout his entire life. And I would further ask that they join me in expressing my sincerest condolences to Charles's beloved wife, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, siblings and other family members.

The Ashland Daily Independent recently published an editorial that highlights some of Charles Wheeler's accomplishments, and I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.