

and talks about the doc fix but votes against it.

So I would think my friend from Kentucky should get a different historian to help him with facts because they are simply wrong, and I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, I will only continue for 2 minutes. Why would you vote for a bill when you know it is not going to be honored? Why would you vote for a bill you knew was going to be violated in the first bill brought to the floor after you passed it? As far as the doc fix is concerned, I have a history with the doc fix that I don't need to defend to the majority leader or to anybody in this body. Check with the Kentucky Medical Association and all my doctors whom I represent in Kentucky.

I think the letter of the gentleman from Louisville states the facts better than I. We want a country where my 40 grandchildren have the same abilities I did growing up. We want a country that doesn't owe everybody in the world for our existence.

The question I have been asked mostly is: Why now? Well, why not now? What better time to stand than now, when the majority leader has the ability to do exactly on this bill what he has done on 25 bills in the last 5 months: file cloture, fill the tree, and vote yea or nay, get the 60 votes, pass the bill, and extend these temporary benefits. We may pass this other bill—I hope we do—that will extend them on a permanent basis for a year—until the end of the year, anyway.

I think it is very important that people understand that I have the same right he does. He was elected by the people in Nevada, with fewer people than in Kentucky. So I have the same right as any other Senator here on the floor. It is not a filibuster when you object. That ought to be brought out clearly. A filibuster is when you stand on this floor and you talk and talk and talk. I have not done that.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I know my friends from Tennessee and Texas wish to speak, but I have to respond because I was mentioned again. I can't match, now or in the past, my friend's fast ball, his curve ball, or his 40 grandchildren. But I do have 16 grandchildren. I do think it is important to understand that the reasoning is a little unusual. He said I wouldn't vote for a bill that I thought would not be upheld at a later time, or procedures in the bill not followed. I don't know why anyone is entitled to be the judge and jury when you pass legislation. And if it is the law, there are ways of upholding that.

With pay-go, we have some experience. We know it works. It worked during the Clinton years. We paid down

the national debt as a result of what happened during the Clinton years. Pay-go was dismissed during the Bush years.

My friend talks about the debt. He wants to make sure the debt doesn't go up. Where was he during the Bush years, with two unpaid-for wars, taxes unpaid for, running up trillions of dollars of red ink on the American people? We tried to address that. We asked for a debt commission to be established. We did that by legislation on the floor. My friend didn't vote for that. He didn't vote for pay-go. So we are trying on the floor—we have legislation that will resolve this issue.

What my friend said is a little unusual. He said why doesn't the leader file for cloture, use up a week or 10 days, waste that time, and then hold off getting to all of the other things. That doesn't make sense. It is without any sense, when, in fact, with the Senator withdrawing his objection, we could get it done just like that. We wouldn't have to wait a week or 10 days. He made his stand. I think he is wrong, as do the American people, and as do the people of Kentucky, in spite of the letter from Robert.

Madam President, so that I don't take advantage of my position as being leader, I ask unanimous consent that the time I consumed in my back and forth with Senator BUNNING, which was under Republican control, be charged to leader time.

I wonder if the staff has heard whether Senators SESSIONS and LEAHY wish to take the full hour of time. How much time does my friend from Texas wish?

Mr. CORNYN. About 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. And the Senator from Tennessee is here. If we run into a shortage of time, we will be happy to try to work it out in some way with the minority.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the leader yield for a brief statement?

Mr. REID. My friend from Texas has been so very patient.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republicans control the time.

The Senator from Texas is recognized.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about Texas Independence Day. On this day in 1836, delegates from 59 Texas settlements signed a declaration of their right to live in liberty, and to take charge of their own destiny.

The document they produced shares much in common with the Declaration signed in Philadelphia six decades earlier. For example, both sets of Founders believed in fundamental human rights, including the right to address their government for grievances.

Both groups of Founders insisted on the obligation to change their form of government if it trampled on those rights.

Both groups of Founders created new nations and have been honored by successive generations for creating legacies of liberty.

Of course, there were differences between the conventions of 1776 and 1836, between Philadelphia and Washington-on-the-Brazos. For one thing, the Texans took action quickly. They adopted their declaration on the second day of their convention. They acted quickly because they knew the forces of tyranny were already in the field and at that moment were trying to crush their freedoms.

Less than 200 miles to the west, Santa Anna's army was laying siege to the Alamo. Its young commander, William Barret Travis, had sent out an inspiring letter 6 days earlier. In it he wrote:

Fellow citizens and compatriots, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna.

The enemy has demanded a surrender. . . . otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword. . . . I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat.

History tells us that death came to the defenders of the Alamo. But soon victory came for the people of Texas. On April 21 of that year, Sam Houston and about 900 Texas soldiers defeated the much larger Mexican army at the battle of San Jacinto. By this victory, Texans won the independence they had declared less than 2 months earlier.

Sam Houston, the commander of those troops and commander in chief of the battle at San Jacinto, served as a Congressman from Tennessee, he served as Governor of Tennessee, and after the battle of San Jacinto, he went on to be elected to the Republic of Texas and became one of the first Texans to serve in the Senate in the seat I currently occupy.

I believe that he and the other founders of our Republic and of our great State would be proud of the 24 million Americans who call Texas home. They would be proud that Texas remains a land of opportunity, and that we are outperforming the Nation in job creation. They would be proud of the fact that Texas remains a welcoming State for pioneers of all stripes, and we have led the Nation in population growth over the last 2 years, as people have voted with their feet and moved to the land of opportunity, otherwise known as Texas.

They would be proud that even during a severe recession we continue to build businesses, raise families, and make our communities even better places to live. Just like the founding generation, we are showing the world that, when faced with adversity, Texans do not retreat, we reload.

In honor of the founders of the Republic of Texas, and all who are free because of their vision and sacrifice, I say: God bless Texas and may God bless the United States of America.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded; I ask unanimous consent that we reserve the Republican time and that I be able to speak for 2 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I want to speak about the unemployment situation in my home State of New York. By mid-March, 54,000 people will lose their benefits if we don't move forward with the short-term extension of unemployment insurance. That is tragic. It is virtually inhumane.

I have been around my State meeting with people who are looking for work. You look into their eyes and you feel their pain. Many of them are middle-class people who have had very good-paying jobs. Many of them have lost their jobs. Many lost their jobs more than a year ago and they have spent every day, 7 days a week, looking. I met a woman in Rochester. She was No. 2 in human resources for a big company. Her job was her life. She has been looking for 2 years and can't find a job. I plead with my colleague from Kentucky and all of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—while we are debating a larger bill to extend unemployment benefits, we must allow this to go forward.

We must allow this short-term extension to go forward for the sake of those people who lost their jobs, through no fault of their own, and they are desperately looking for work, but in this awful economy they can't find it.

According to The Hill newspaper, New York is affected No. 1 by this. It is vital, vital, vital that we move this forward. I plead with my friend from Kentucky to reconsider and let the short-term extension move forward. We have done it before under the same conditions we have asked for this time.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask that the time during the quorum call not go against the morning business time of either side. I ask that the time now being used in morning business be equally divided.

Mr. BUNNING. Madam President, reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. BUNNING. I wish to understand what the Senator from New York is trying to do.

Mr. SCHUMER. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. BUNNING. Sure.

Mr. SCHUMER. I am just trying to equally divide the quorum call. I asked unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 2 minutes.

Mr. BUNNING. And that was granted.

Mr. SCHUMER. And we go back and everyone get their full allocation of morning business, and that was granted. There was no intention of a quorum call to be taken between either side.

Mr. BUNNING. But that is the normal procedure.

Mr. SCHUMER. I understand.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to now use time from morning business on this side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND COBRA EXTENSIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, right now, families across my home State and the entire country want nothing more than to see us come together and pass meaningful help for the people they see struggling every day. They want to see help for people such as their neighbors and friends and family members who, through no fault of their own, have found themselves out of a job and who, despite their best efforts, are unable to find one today. They want help for the seniors in their communities who are being turned away from doctors because of devastating cuts in Medicare reimbursement rates, or all those who are struggling to afford health care because they lost a job and are now facing the impossible task of affording care on their own.

Americans understand that during these difficult times people need help to make ends meet. They understand there needs to be a lifeline for people who never thought they would need assistance from the government but who now have nowhere else to turn. But what Americans and those in my home State of Washington do not understand is why Washington, DC, cannot seem to deliver; why, when they make hard choices every day in their own lives to support their families and help those in need, Washington, DC, cannot do the same; why, at a time when needs have never been greater, the only words they hear out of Washington, DC, are "gridlock," "stalemate," and "standstill."

Today we have a clear-cut example to show the American people what is

wrong with Washington, DC; that is because today one single Republican Senator is standing in the way of the unemployment benefits of 400,000 Americans. One single Republican Senator is blocking an extension of COBRA benefits for 500,000 Americans. One single Republican Senator is forcing doctors to take a 21-percent cut in Medicare reimbursement rates that could force seniors to be turned away from the Medicare coverage on which they rely. One single Republican Senator is blocking an extension of critical highway funds that has construction workers and transportation employees at home today and that has cut critical payments to struggling States. One single Republican Senator has put posturing before people, politics before families, and point scoring before the needs of struggling Americans.

The legislation we are trying so hard to pass is very straightforward. It is aimed at helping real families with real problems they face every day, and the consequences of it being blocked by one single Republican Senator are just as real.

The bill we are trying to pass includes an extension of unemployment insurance that, by the way, in my home State hundreds of thousands of individuals rely on to buy groceries and to pay their mortgages and to help pay for school for their kids. For years, these benefits have been routinely extended in tough times. And times, by the way, have rarely been tougher than they are now. But today families in every single one of our States are sitting around their kitchen table trying to figure out how they are going to make it through the weeks and the months ahead without these payments.

This package we are trying to pass also includes an extension of COBRA, health care for workers who lost their jobs through no fault of their own, and health care benefits that come with it. In my home State, thousands of unemployed workers have the ability to see a doctor solely because we have provided this important assistance. It is a provision that is critical because health care is often the single biggest cost that unemployed workers face. In fact, you should know on average a monthly health care premium payment to cover a family costs over \$1,000, which represents about 80 percent of the average unemployment check.

Another vital health care measure included in this bill we are trying to pass is a provision that would overturn a staggering 21-percent cut in payments to doctors who accept Medicare patients. Just yesterday my office heard from a doctor in a small community in my State, Poulsbo, WA, who is one of very few in the region who is taking new Medicare patients. He said he feared just what this cut would mean for him and his practice. He told my staff this cut would limit his ability to continue serving the needs of seniors in his area.