

The majority of President Bush's first nominees waited years for confirmation—the first group he put up.

But besides that, as I told the chairman, I hope to end the tit-for-tats on this issue. He is having a good record of moving nominees who are good, and the ones who are opposed on this side will be vigorously opposed. But this nominee is qualified, and I support the nominee and urge my colleagues to do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON).

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

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 30 Ex.]

YEAS—99

Akaka	Durbin	McConnell
Alexander	Ensign	Menendez
Barrasso	Enzi	Merkley
Baucus	Feingold	Mikulski
Bayh	Feinstein	Murkowski
Begich	Franken	Murray
Bennet	Gillibrand	Nelson (NE)
Bennett	Graham	Nelson (FL)
Bingaman	Grassley	Pryor
Bond	Gregg	Reed
Boxer	Hagan	Reid
Brown (MA)	Harkin	Risch
Brown (OH)	Hatch	Roberts
Brownback	Inhofe	Rockefeller
Bunning	Inouye	Sanders
Burr	Isakson	Schumer
Burr	Johanns	Sessions
Byrd	Johnson	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaufman	Shelby
Cardin	Kerry	Snowe
Carper	Klobuchar	Specter
Casey	Kohl	Stabenow
Chambliss	Kyl	Tester
Coburn	Landrieu	Thune
Cochran	Lautenberg	Udall (CO)
Collins	Leahy	Udall (NM)
Conrad	LeMieux	Vitter
Corker	Levin	Voinovich
Cornyn	Lieberman	Warner
Crapo	Lincoln	Webb
DeMint	Lugar	Whitehouse
Dodd	McCain	Wicker
Dorgan	McCaskey	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Hutchison

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### EXPIRING PROVISIONS AND JOB CREATION

Mr. BAUCUS. We now return to the urgent legislation to create jobs and

extend vital safety net and tax provisions.

This urgent legislation would prevent millions of Americans from falling through the safety net. It would extend vital programs that expired Sunday. It would put cash into the hands of Americans who would spend it quickly, boosting economic demand.

It would extend critical programs and tax incentives that create jobs. Let me be specific. Just today, we received detailed estimates from the National Economic Council on what would happen if we fail to act. Unless we act, a half million workers who lose their jobs nationwide, including nearly 1,600 in Montana, would be ineligible for help paying for their health insurance under COBRA.

Unless we act, the average doctor in America would stand to lose more than \$16,600 in payments for Medicare. The average doctor in Montana would lose about \$13,000. Unless we act, nearly 40 million Medicare beneficiaries and nearly 9 million TRICARE beneficiaries nationwide would be affected. That includes nearly 144,000 Montanans with Medicare and nearly 33,000 Montanans with TRICARE.

Unless we act, 400,000 Americans would be ineligible for expanded unemployment insurance benefits. This is urgent legislation. We must extend this legislation, and soon.

We had a productive day on the bill yesterday. Senator SESSIONS offered his amendment to impose discretionary spending caps. This is essentially the same amendment the Senate rejected on January 28. A point of order lies against the amendment under section 306 of the Congressional Budget Act, which requires 60 votes to waive that point of order. At the appropriate time, I intend to raise that point of order against the Sessions amendment.

As well, Senator THUNE offered his amendment proposing business tax cuts offset by cutting back stimulus funding in the Recovery Act. This is essentially the same argument the Senator from Kentucky, Mr. BUNNING, has been raising on the narrower, short-term unemployment and COBRA extension bill. The Senator from South Dakota and the Senator from Kentucky both seek to cut back the Recovery Act.

I believe these efforts are mistaken. Let me tell you why. On issues relating to the budget and the economy, we turn to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office for the straight story. They are the neutral referees, and the CBO says the Recovery Act is working. That is why it would be a mistake to cut back on the Recovery Act.

Last month CBO issued its report on the effects of the Recovery Act in the fourth quarter. In that report, this is what the CBO said:

CBO estimates that in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2009, the Recovery Act added between 1 million and 2.1 million to the number of workers employed in the United States, and it increased the number

of full-time equivalent jobs by between 1.4 million and 3 million.

That is what CBO says. They say the Recovery Act created or saved between 1 and 3 million jobs. That is real job creation. That means the Recovery Act is working. That is why we need to defeat efforts such as that made by the Senator from Kentucky and the Senator from South Dakota to cut back on the Recovery Act. Cutting back on a proven job creator is the last thing we would want to do right now.

We are working to line up votes on the pending amendments and an amendment the Senator from Kentucky seeks to offer on the short-term unemployment and COBRA bill. I am hopeful we may be able to reach an agreement on these matters this afternoon. I thank all Senators for their cooperation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND.) The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, as a freshman Member of this body, I have a great deal of respect for those who have been a part of this institution for many years.

On both sides of the aisle, veteran Senators lend their experience, and their invaluable knowledge of procedure, to the debates that take place in this Chamber every day.

And, as anyone who knows the history of the Senate can tell you, this has always been a friendly place, no matter which party is in control.

This has always been a place where political leaders could disagree without being disagreeable, no matter how vast their differences happen to be. This Senate has always been governed by mutual respect, mutual trust, and mutual friendship. Without these key ingredients, it is impossible for us to work together.

Such was the genius of our Founding Fathers, who framed this system of government.

They knew that partisan politics would rage outside these walls, so they created the Senate to be a refuge for those who are prepared to move forward together to solve national problems.

The history of this Chamber is filled with legendary stories of compromise, of relationships across party lines that drove Senators from different backgrounds to find common purpose.

Our dear friend Senator Kennedy, the last lion of this Senate, was one of the greatest at forging bipartisan consensus and fostering mutual respect with the other side.

These stories remind us of the value of civil discourse. They speak to the necessity of working with one another,

not against one another, to confront the challenges we face.

But, I am beginning to wonder if these stories are just stories.

Although I have served in this Chamber for only a short time, I recognize that the atmosphere in this body is not what it once was.

I hear the accounts of bipartisan cooperation in the past, but I see fewer and fewer examples of it today.

In fact, just last week, the country watched as two centuries of Senate procedure and privilege were abused for partisan gain.

My colleagues and I were trying to move forward with a bill that extended unemployment benefits, health insurance for the unemployed, lending assistance for small businesses, and other important programs.

No part of this bill was new or controversial. No part of it would significantly change the existing programs that were in place, which were due to expire at the end of the week. We all knew that, if this Senate failed to take action, all of these programs would grind to a halt almost immediately.

Ordinary Americans across the country would stop getting their unemployment checks and their COBRA health benefits. Small businesses would see credit dry up literally overnight. In the middle of the worst economic crisis in decades, this would be a disaster. It would be the last thing that America needed as we tried to help people get back on their feet. But that is exactly what happened when my friend from Kentucky decided to raise objection. In an instant, a single Republican Senator slammed the door on the American people, and left thousands of ordinary folks out in the cold.

He cut off assistance for those who need it most. He denied unemployment insurance to those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Just when folks were beginning to feel a bit more optimistic, my good friend from Kentucky held up his hand and said, "Not so fast."

As a result, on Sunday night, 15,000 Illinoisans lost their unemployment benefits. Another 15,000 will lose their benefits next week, and the week after, until my Republican friend drops his objection and allows us to pass an extension. These are folks who have felt the worst effects of the economic crisis. They are ordinary people, ordinary American families, who cannot afford to miss a check.

But the Senator from Kentucky has objected to continuing these programs. He has prevented the government from putting these checks in the mail. He has frozen the credit that will allow small businesses to create jobs and put more people back to work. He has sent thousands of Federal workers home without pay. He has shut down important highway projects all across America.

I have been in public service for almost 30 years. In all that time, I have never seen anything like this outrageous abuse of senatorial privilege.

We can argue about policy. We can debate legislation. We can discuss procedure and disagree about political tactics. But I believe it is wrong to play politics with people's lives. And I urge my friend from Kentucky to stop.

If my colleagues and I are able to overcome these objections and pass this bill in the next few days, we may be able to restore these benefits retroactively. But the damage has already been done. These programs are not designed to help people who can get by without unemployment insurance for a few days here and there.

These programs are targeted at those who can barely survive paycheck to paycheck. They are for people who need help keeping food on the table, until they have the opportunity to get back on their feet. They are for people who do not have the luxury of waiting just a few more days to pay the bills, as my colleague seems to think.

The Senator from Kentucky has brought our economic recovery to a grinding halt. He is playing politics with hard-working Americans, and he is wasting the time of this distinguished body.

What has happened to the Senate of our forefathers?

What has happened to the atmosphere of friendship that drove past Senators to work together to solve big problems?

My colleagues and I have offered a solution that is acceptable to almost every Member of this Chamber. There are 99 Senators who either support this measure or would like to see an up-or-down vote. But my friend from Kentucky does not mind taking advantage of the rules of this Chamber to make a political point, even if it means adding to the misery of hundreds of thousands across this country, including his home State.

Perhaps we should not be surprised. After all, we have seen this kind of obstruction time and time again from our Republican colleagues, even on issues that are critical to the well-being of more than 30 million Americans.

So maybe it should come as no surprise that a Republican Senator would once again choose to manipulate Senate procedure for partisan gain. In many ways, I suppose that is all we can expect from a party that has refused to offer solutions of their own.

I believe the American people deserve much better than that. I believe regular folks expect us to help make their lives better, not worse. And I believe they are tired of obstructionism. They are tired of hearing that their representatives in Washington can not get things done.

I would urge all of my colleagues to reach for the generous spirit of our forefathers, which defined this Chamber as a friendly and inclusive place for so many decades.

I would urge my colleagues to debate the issues honestly and without resorting to distractions and obstructionism. No legislation will ever be perfect. But

I believe it is irresponsible to hold up an important and fundamentally good bill for political reasons.

I ask my friend from Kentucky to drop his objection, as others in this Chamber have asked him many times over the last few days.

Let us move forward together. Let us be constructive. Let us recapture the friendly atmosphere that helped our predecessors rise above partisan politics and achieve great things.

This is not how the Senate was intended to function. So let's prove to the world that this is still the greatest deliberative body on the planet. Let's reject these tactics and move forward together. And let's, without delay, stop the obstruction on this important legislation.

Madam President, I would like to speak on another issue as in morning business.

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

Mr. BURRIS. Thank you, Madam President.

#### HONORING THE ILLINOIS ATHLETES OF THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

Mr. BURRIS. Madam President, we live in a world divided. International tension, mistrust, and even war too often separate nation from nation. But every 2 years, thousands of athletes from countries all over the world come together to celebrate the human spirit.

They meet in competition, arriving on the world stage from all five inhabited continents. Each of these five continents is represented by a simple, colored circle—a ring intertwined with four others to form the familiar symbol worn by every Olympic athlete.

The Olympic Games are a powerful force for world unity. And this year, for the 21st Winter Olympics, the eyes of the world turned to Vancouver, Canada—just across the border we share with our good friends to the north.

As always, the competition was fierce in every sport. The greatest athletes in the world tested their skills on some of the most challenging courses in history. Records were set and broken.

The world witnessed many triumphs—such as the success of a young Canadian figure skater, only days after the sudden loss of her mother.

We also came together in the face of great tragedy, mourning the shocking death of a young athlete from the Republic of Georgia.

Such Olympic moments, both triumphant and tragic, are blind to region or nationality. They remind us of the qualities and the limitations we share in every field of human endeavor. And at every moment, from the opening ceremonies until the Olympic flame was extinguished, these Winter Games served as a testament to all that we have in common. In a divided world, they served as an affirmation of the human spirit, and the value of friendship through sport.