

This isn't just a number. It is not a statistic. We are talking about 4,700 families who won't have a source of income to get them through this very difficult time.

Then there is COBRA. Again, COBRA pays 65 percent of the cost of health insurance for people who have lost their jobs. In Maryland, there are 9,282 people—close to 10,000—who have lost their benefits. COBRA makes sure they have health care. We are talking about someone, for example, who worked for a company all of his life, and then he was laid off because it was part of the great layoff that is going on in my State. He went to buy health insurance, and he is buying it through COBRA. It costs almost four times what it cost where he worked. At the same time, he has health problems. He is a diabetic. He is a father. He wants to work and, most of all, he wants to have health insurance for himself and his family. But, oh, no, we are holding it up because of something called pay-go.

Then what else are we doing? We are not paying our doctors. Regardless of how one feels about health insurance reform, you can't have health reform without doctors.

The opposition to health care reform, like Mr. BOEHNER, says we have the best health care system in the world. If we have the best health care system, why aren't we paying our doctors what they deserve? These are highly skilled people who work sometimes day and night to be able to save lives or improve lives. They assume the risks of medical management of highly complex cases. Why are we cutting their pay by 21 percent? I don't see those guys over there cutting their pay 21 percent until we figure out how to pay for our salaries. Why are we cutting doctors 21 percent?

I am so frustrated about this. Whether it is job reform, health care reform, mortgage reform, in this body, when all is said and done, more gets said than gets done.

The American people are as mad as they can be, and they don't want to take it anymore. I feel the same way. I am sick and tired of all these obstruction tactics that prevent people from getting the benefits they need to take care of their families or fund the programs that create jobs.

If we are going to have job reform and health reform, I think we need Senate reform. I am old-fashioned. I believe the majority rules. I think 51 ought to be a magic number. I am so tired of the tyranny of the 60. Oh, we need 60 votes—60 votes, a super-majority every time, except for the Pledge of Allegiance. I come back to wanting the majority rule. This is why I stand four square for filibuster reform.

I am heart and soul a reformer, sometimes a little too mouthy. Some people say I am a little too feisty. But I want to get the job done. I am ready to duke it out in the arena of ideas, present our

best arguments, present our best cases, take a vote, and see how it turns out.

I hope when I offer amendments I win, but if I lose because I get less than 51, I feel I have gotten a square deal. But if I have to go after 60, I feel I am inhibited by the tyranny of 60.

I believe the filibuster is a dated, arcane tactic that belongs to another century and another Senate. I wish to see the filibuster rule either ended or modified.

There are those on our side of the aisle who say: Don't do that. What happens if we lose control, we might need it. Maybe if majority ruled, we would not lose control. Most of all, maybe the American people would see us actually debating, discussing, amending, and voting on ideas. Right now, the other side hides behind procedure. It hides behind process, it muddies the water, and the people are starting to catch on.

I am calling on our institution to seriously consider Tom Harkin's legislation. I think Senator HARKIN is on to something. Senator HARKIN and I are great respecters of the Senate and its traditions. We understand the filibuster and when it was used for great and grand debates on, for example, the expansion of civil rights in our country.

Under the Harkin proposal, you would get four shots at it. I think my colleague from Kentucky would like it. He is a baseball icon. You get three strikes and you are out. Maybe we would get four bites at the apple. The first time you vote if you don't get 60, it would fail. The second time you would need 59 votes or it would fail. The third time you would need 57 votes or it would fail. The fourth time, 53 votes and then we would come back to 51.

We are not for throwing away the filibuster, but we are for modifying it. Hopefully, it will bring us to a Senate that wants more function as the greatest deliberative body in the world. Now we are the greatest delayed body in the world. We don't deliberate; we delay. We don't do constructive things; we do obstructive things. This is not the Senate the American people want. They want us to debate ideas. They want us to do due diligence on those ideas, to make sure they are sensible, that they are affordable, that we are doing something that accomplishes the great missions of our country. I want, again, majority to rule.

I call upon the Senator from Kentucky and the other party: Let this bill go. Bring it out. Please, let us have a vote on it so tonight, when the families in Maryland go to bed, they can be sure that tomorrow when they awaken, their safety net of unemployment compensation is there; that they can buy their health insurance through COBRA, that gifted and talented doctors will know they will be paid and reimbursed and acknowledged for the great services they are performing. That is what the United States should be doing. There is plenty of money for other things.

When they talk about how they want this to be pay as you go—I voted for pay-go. I did. But we are in an emergency situation, and I believe this calls us to act now, and I hope we act tonight.

I hope we can all work together, and when more is said, the less gets said and more gets done.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR ANNE PATTERSON

Mr. KAUFMAN. Madam President, I rise again to pay tribute to one of our Nation's great Federal employees.

From the day of its creation as the first executive department in 1789, the State Department has carried out the important work of American diplomacy, pursuing peaceful relations between the United States and other nations around the world. When our role as a world power grew in the late 19th century, our diplomats became peacemakers among nations. Since the end of World War II, we heavily invested our time, treasure, and human capital in the preservation of global peace during a time wrought with potential for war and mass destruction.

Today, in the aftermath of the Cold War and the September 11 attacks, our State Department personnel, and our Foreign Service officers in particular, work tirelessly to promote the American values of liberty and international cooperation.

Stationed in every region, they daily endure risks to their health and safety. They leave behind family and a familiar culture. These talented and dedicated men and women are the living embodiment of President Kennedy's declaration that, while we must never negotiate out of fear, we must never fear to negotiate.

Those in the Foreign Service must pass a rigorous examination and be prepared to serve in any of our 250 posts around the world. They have jobs as consular officers assisting Americans abroad, political or economic officers analyzing trends in foreign countries and promoting U.S. interests, management officers running our embassies or public diplomacy officers who share the story of America with foreign audiences.

The most senior and successful diplomats may become ambassadors, the public face of our Nation and the President's personal representatives abroad.

One distinguished Ambassador whose career exemplifies the work of our Foreign Service is Anne Patterson.

A native of Arkansas, Anne studied at Wellesley College and the University of North Carolina. She first joined the Foreign Service in 1973 as an economic

officer. Her initial postings overseas included Saudi Arabia and the United Nations offices in Geneva, Switzerland. From 1991 to 1993, Anne served as the State Department's Director for Andean Countries and later was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs.

In 1997, Anne was nominated and confirmed as Ambassador to El Salvador, where she served for 3 years. She became our Ambassador to Colombia in 2000. While escorting the late Senator Paul Wellstone on a visit that year to a rural town, an explosive device was found nearby by local security forces. That incident underscores the reality of the many dangers our Foreign Service officers face while serving overseas.

Anne returned to Washington in 2003, where she served as deputy inspector general for the State Department. The following year, she was appointed Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. After U.N. ambassador John Danforth resigned in January 2005, Anne became acting ambassador, representing the United States at the United Nations. She continued to serve in that role for 6 months.

From 2005 to 2007, Anne led the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In May 2007, after Ambassador Ryan Crocker left Islamabad to take up his post in Iraq, President Bush nominated Anne to serve as our Ambassador in Pakistan. She continues her work in Islamabad to this day, representing our Nation at a time of great importance with the United States-Pakistani relationship.

During the times I have had the honor of visiting her and our Embassy officials in Pakistan, I have been impressed by her dedication to furthering Americans' priorities in that country, to protecting our national security interests, and to managing our talented team on the ground.

The life of a Foreign Service officer is not easy. Anne and her husband and her two sons and stepdaughter can attest that Foreign Service families face many challenges during a career of living overseas and moving frequently. In addition, Foreign Service families must make significant sacrifices to serve in dangerous locales, such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq, where there are restrictions on bringing spouses and children to post. These officers serve in the face of great hardship, not for financial reward but for the satisfaction of serving the United States of America, protecting its interests, and promoting peace among nations.

I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the enormous contribution made by Ambassador Anne Patterson and all those who serve in the Foreign Service and the State Department.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENIORS COLA INCREASE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, tomorrow I intend to call up an amendment within the discussion of the jobs bill which I think will have significant impact on the lives of many millions of our fellow Americans. As you know, this year for the first time in many decades, our senior citizens are not going to be seeing a cost-of-living increase. In this very severe recession, that is unfortunate. Seniors in Vermont and around the country have told me that because of rising health care costs, because of rising energy and heating costs, because of rising prescription drug costs—all issues which seniors and disabled veterans are particularly prone to—it is unfair they not get a COLA this year.

I am very happy to inform my colleagues that President Obama, in his budget, has made it very clear he understands the need for a \$250 emergency payment to go out to over 55 million seniors, veterans, and the disabled. I very much appreciate his support for this concept. And he is absolutely right, that in these very difficult times we cannot forget about some of the most vulnerable people in our society. There are a lot of lower income seniors out there who are struggling, as well as disabled veterans and disabled people in general.

This amendment, which essentially does this year what we did last year in the stimulus package, would provide a one-time \$250 payment. This amendment has very widespread support all over this country, and let me mention to you some of the organizations that are supporting it. The largest senior group in America is the AARP, and they are very vigorously supporting this concept, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars are supporting this \$250 payment, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare is supporting it, the Disabled Veterans of America—the DVA—is supporting it, the Older Women's League is supporting it, and many other organizations representing seniors, disabled people, and our veterans are supporting it.

This recession has forced more and more seniors out of the middle class and into poverty. In fact, according to a National Academy of Sciences formula, the poverty rate among Americans 65 and older is close to 19 percent—almost double the official poverty rate of 9.7 percent. One of the problems I have had in dealing with Social Security COLAs for many years, including when I was in the House, is I have long believed it is an error, a statistical problem, when we lump every-

body together and formulate what a COLA is. If you lump everybody together, I think you can probably make the argument that there is no inflation and in fact in some instances there is deflation.

We see that every day. Young people who go out and buy a laptop computer will probably pay less for that laptop today than they did a year ago. Prices may be going down. For wide-screen TVs, prices may be going down. For many items people buy, prices may be going down. But seniors have a different set of needs than ordinary Americans and 16-year-old kids have. Seniors are much more dependent on prescription drugs. The cost of prescription drugs is going up. Seniors are much more dependent on health care. The cost of health care is going up. Seniors are dependent—at least in the Northeast where I live, in Vermont—on keeping their homes warm, and the cost of fuel has gone up. So I think if you take a hard look at the needs of seniors, the needs of people with disabilities, the needs of disabled veterans, you will find they have seen increased costs over the year. And if we say to those folks: There is no COLA for Social Security, and we are not doing anything for you, they are going to find themselves in substantially worse shape than they were last year.

I did want to say that this amendment, as of now, is supported by Senators DODD, GILLIBRAND, LEAHY, and WHITEHOUSE, and we look forward to more support. This concept is in the President's budget, and the President has been very clear about the need to go forward with a \$250 payment. This amendment we will be offering tomorrow is supported by the AARP, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the National Committee to Protect Social Security and Medicare, the Disabled Veterans of America, Older Women's League, and many other organizations.

We will be offering an amendment which simply says we are not going to leave America's seniors out in the cold. We are not going to leave America's disabled veterans out in the cold. And while there is no COLA this year, we are at least going to do what we did last year and provide them with a \$250 emergency payment. Not a whole lot of money in the great scheme of things, but, trust me, having just met with seniors on Monday, a lot of seniors in this country today are finding it very difficult to feed themselves and to take care of their basic needs. While this is not going to solve all of their problems by any means, it is going to help. So I would hope that tomorrow my colleagues will be supporting this amendment when we bring it forth.

Madam President, with that, I yield the floor.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). The clerk will call the roll.