

and say a simple majority of those voting is not enough. You have to have a majority of everybody in the union. And, as I indicated, based on our elections, it would mean each of us would have to get a majority of everyone in the State.

So they stuck that provision in the bill saying, no, a majority is not enough; you have to have a majority of everyone in the unit. It is this kind of antidemocratic issue they placed in this legislation. I would hope they would take that out. They haven't been willing to do that.

If we can reform our antiquated air traffic control system, it will bring us into the modern world where we are no longer depending on Second World War technology; that is, radar, and we can move into the modern world as most all countries have, where we would have GPS, and it will create lots and lots of jobs, hundreds of thousands of jobs which are so badly needed. Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation, thinks it is essential that we get this done for the safety and security of our Nation and certainly to create lots and lots of jobs.

Second, we must authorize Federal spending for our Nation's highways. About 1.8 million construction jobs in highway and mass transit projects are at stake. If we don't extend this bill, they will be gone, almost 2 million jobs.

So we will be happy to consider a bipartisan idea to get the economy going again. I have talked about two things.

Here are two ideas Republicans have supported in the past: payroll tax cuts and extension of unemployment insurance. Extending the payroll tax cut could save 972,000 American jobs next year alone. Extending unemployment insurance during these tough economic times would save 528,000 American jobs. They have agreed to these in the past.

Speaker BOEHNER and Leader CANTOR wrote to the President yesterday and they said, Our differences should not preclude us from taking action in areas where there is common ground.

I hope they would agree that extending unemployment benefits and cutting the payroll tax are agreements that are common sense. So I agree with them, our differences should not preclude us from taking action in areas where there is common agreement. Let's start with the four commonsense measures I have talked about: the FAA bill; of course, we have to do the extension of the payroll tax cuts; do the unemployment insurance; and, of course, FAA. I would hope we can move on these as quickly as possible.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leaders' time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I see the Senator from New Hampshire is here, and I ask that she be permitted to speak immediately after I have concluded.

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

#### THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, tomorrow night we will hear a speech from the President of the United States about an issue that affects every single one of us in America. It affects millions in a personal way and all of us indirectly. It is the state of our economy. It is an economy that has been wracked by a recession which has gone on way too long. Even the President concedes that we had hoped we would have emerged at this point, but we still have not. I think it is important for us to focus on the reality of life even for working families in America. Too many working families today are struggling to survive paycheck to paycheck.

Over the last 10 or 20 years, we have seen a decline in the rate of growth in real wages, which means that families, even working families, aren't earning enough to keep up with the cost of living. They are falling a little bit behind each year.

They recently surveyed working families across America and asked them a basic question. They said: If you had an emergency in your family and needed to come up with \$2,000 in the next 30 days, could you find that \$2,000 either in your savings or borrowed? Forty-seven percent of working families said they could not come up with \$2,000 in 30 days. Now \$2,000 is the cost of an uneventful trip to an emergency room. It is an indication of the vulnerability of families all across America.

I am also concerned about the fact that, as we speak about the economy, we know many families are doing the right thing, trying to shed debt. We see the credit card debt in America declining as fewer and fewer people borrow against their credit cards, understanding the interest rates they are going to pay are way too high and it is impossible to keep up with your debt if you pile it all on credit cards. People are reluctant to purchase because they are afraid of debt, and vulnerable, with the thought of losing their jobs or per-

haps seeing a decline in their wages. That is the reality of life for working families across America. It is the reality I have seen in Illinois and a reality that affects us nationwide. The President will address that tomorrow night, as he should.

I think there are ways to deal with it, but here is the caution I wish to add: We are fixed on the theme of our Nation's deficit and debt, and we should be, because as we borrow 40 cents for every dollar we spend, we create an unsustainable situation for future generations. That is a fact.

I have been party to the Bowles-Simpson Commission, where I voted for their report. I have worked with the Gang of Six, a bipartisan effort in the Senate which has more than 30 Senators showing an interest in this approach. So I seriously believe this deficit and debt are a problem for us in the long term. But I might remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that Bowles-Simpson, this bipartisan Presidential commission, concluded that we should not hit the brakes on spending, should not hit the brakes on government activity too soon because of the recession. In fact, they recommended that we wait another year, with a serious effort to reduce the deficit coming after the recession.

The logic behind it is obvious. It is virtually impossible to balance the budget of the United States with 14 million people out of work. You need to put Americans back to work earning a good paycheck, paying their taxes, and then you can start building this economy and building toward a balanced budget. I hope we keep that in mind as we talk about what we are facing, as we try to create a climate to create more jobs in America.

It is interesting to me, the President will propose to extend the payroll tax cut for working families across America. It accounts for 2 percent of income. That, to me, is sensible. Put spending power in the hands of working families, lower and middle-income families. These are the people who are struggling paycheck to paycheck. We have done that. We should continue to do that.

The criticism from the Republican side of the aisle is, no, you shouldn't allow a tax cut for middle-income families and those in lower income categories unless you pay for it. Interestingly enough, that is exactly the opposite position from what they took when they talked about tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. When the Republicans wanted to see tax cuts for those making over \$250,000 a year, they say we don't have to pay for it. But when we talk about tax cuts for working families, middle-income families, all of a sudden they become deficit hawks and say you have to pay for those tax cuts. I think we should continue the 2-percent payroll tax cuts to help working families. I think that is good. I also think we ought to extend unemployment benefits.

I spent my time in August in Illinois visiting unemployment offices, where I met a lot of people who are struggling every single day to apply for jobs, sometimes four and five applications a day, and many times without success. They are doing their best to pick up new skills at community colleges and training courses. They are trying to make their resumes look a little more attractive, working to do so, and they are running into a brick wall time after time. Some are in extremely difficult circumstances. Extending unemployment compensation at this point in our economy is absolutely essential. It is the right and caring and humane thing to do, and it also injects money into the economy. The President will call for this, and I think he is right. The Republicans have said we have to pay for that unemployment compensation. Again, it is hard to follow their logic as they offer millions of dollars in tax relief for millions of people, refuse to end the tax cuts and benefits for the most profitable oil companies in America, and when it comes to helping the unemployed and middle income, then they become deficit hawks.

They also talk about the corporate income tax. The corporate income tax rate in America is 35 percent, and they say it is one of the highest in the world. That is true. But it is an effective rate versus the nominal rate. The nominal rate is 35 percent. The effective rate is much lower.

Take, for example, the report that just came out that puts this in perspective. There was a report that compared the salaries for the CEOs, the chief executive officers, of major American corporations. Twenty-five of the one hundred highest paid corporate executives in the United States earned more in pay than their company paid in taxes in the year 2010. That is right. Our Tax Code is so easy on massive multinational corporations, they pay their top executives more than they pay in Federal taxes each year. It is a startling fact. It is a report released by the Institute for Policy Studies. If you look through the report, you will see some of the biggest names in corporate America.

Look at General Electric. They made waves when it was reported that they paid zero, absolutely nothing, in Federal taxes last year. In fact, GE got a refund from the government of over \$3 billion. The top executive at General Electric was compensated to the tune of \$15.2 million. Consider that for a moment when we talk about the unfairness of corporate taxes. The biggest multinational corporations in America are escaping the 35-percent rate. Some are actually getting money back, and they are paying their executives money in reward for coming up with these tax strategies under our current Tax Code.

Do you want to clean up the Tax Code? Stop imposing the highest corporate tax rate on middle and small businesses, and impose it on the large corporations, the most profitable corporations in America.

The other idea is this repatriation tax holiday. We should take care here. Before we allow major corporations to bring their profits back into the United States tax free or at lower tax rates, which is what they are asking for, look at what happened when we tried that under the Bush administration. There were \$362 billion of earnings repatriated under the holiday, and \$312 billion qualified for the tax break, but we didn't see a corresponding increase in employment of those corporations. They brought back the money they earned in profits overseas and declared it as dividends and profits, and gave it in compensation and bonuses to their executives. They did not create jobs. Now the Republicans are pushing for that same strategy. They want to give this tax holiday to these major corporations with no strings attached. I think we have learned our lesson under the Bush administration. If that money is coming back to America, it should be dedicated to growing the corporations in America and growing good-paying jobs right here at home. It shouldn't go out the door in executive compensation, dividends, and profits.

The Tax Code is unfair, but it is primarily unfair to working families. We have got to do everything we can to make it fairer for them. Secondly, we have got to make sure we eliminate some of the loopholes that are stacked in the Tax Code today. I have been in favor of tax reform and think it is an essential part of fairness in America, getting the economy moving forward, and dealing responsibly with our deficit.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, as you know so well as the Senator from New York, across the country this weekend Americans everywhere will gather to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001. Families from every town, from every city and State will mark this day in their own solemn way and take a moment to remember and honor the nearly 3,000 victims of those senseless attacks. More than any episode in recent American history, the events of 9/11 were experienced on a very personal level all across this country.

No one was untouched by the tragedy of that day. All of us can remember exactly where we were when we heard the news. We remember those frantic hours as we tried to call loved ones. We remember the silence in our skies as our Nation's entire air system shut down. We remember mourning the loss of family, friends, and neighbors; and we remember the fear and uncertainty as we wondered if more attacks were coming.

We remember the sight we all watched on television, again and

again—the sickening sight of the falling towers of the Trade Center. It is a vision that has been forever seared into every American's mind.

As Governor of New Hampshire at the time, I was actually in Washington for a National Governors Association event on early childhood education. I will never forget looking out of my hotel and seeing the smoke rising from the Pentagon.

The attacks of 9/11 forever changed us as a nation. Our entire notion of security was turned upside down. Our government changed, our policies changed, and our view of the world changed. For our children and grandchildren especially, this became one of the defining events of their generation and has left an indelible mark on their world view.

As we gather this weekend, all of us in our own way will take a moment to recall those feelings of sadness and anger and to honor the memories of those we lost. But that loss is not the end of the story, and grief is not the true legacy of 9/11. We are not defined by what happens to us but by how we respond when we are faced with adversity. September 11 did not cripple us as a nation. Instead, it brought out the best in all of us. Our story is really how we responded in the face of this attack—with courage, resolve, and unity. In the aftermath of September 11, we showed the world the true meaning of the American spirit.

The story of America's response to 9/11 starts on that very day with accounts of heroism that we could never have imagined. We remember the firefighters and the other first responders climbing up the stairwells of the burning World Trade Center while others fled down, and how they made the ultimate sacrifice for their selflessness. We remember the courageous passengers on American Airlines Flight 93 who took away the terrorists' greatest weapon, fear, by fighting back even though it meant their lives. And who knows how many lives they saved, whether they stopped that attack.

In the days that followed, all Americans stepped forward in any way they could. Red Cross centers were overwhelmed with volunteer blood donors. Millions of us donated money and offered up prayers. In New Hampshire in the days following the attack I remember joining a crowd of hundreds for a prayer service at St. Paul's Church in Concord. We came together to honor the victims and to comfort each other. The response was incredible. The crowd spilled out into the streets with many waving American flags, holding candles, and singing "God Bless America."

In New Hampshire, our State government and our employees refused to buckle under the terrorist threat. We kept the State working on September 11.

I will not forget the more than 100 fire departments across New Hampshire that called our State fire marshal's office to offer their services for