

overshadowed by a massive \$453 billion tax hike that would be highly damaging to the ability of businesses that pay individual tax rates to expand operations, hire new workers and compete internationally. According to data from the Department of the Treasury, 80 percent of taxpayers affected by this new 5.6 percent tax increase would be business owners. Furthermore, the Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that 34 percent of business income would be ensnared by the job-destroying tax increase in S. 1660.

Worse, if the 2001 tax relief expires as scheduled in 2013, this new tax surcharge would push the top marginal tax rate to nearly 50 percent when accounting for the new 3.8 percent Medicare tax on unearned income in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It would also sharply increase taxes on capital gains and dividends investment, hurting small businesses and investors.

Small businesses have been burdened by more than \$1 trillion new taxes and penalties in the health care law and regulatory agencies have churned out over 60,000 pages of new Federal regulations this calendar year alone. Simply put, they cannot afford the burden of another tax hike from Washington under the guise of job creation.

This is why the Nation's leading business groups representing millions of American business owners, including the National Federation of Independent Business and the National Association of Manufacturers, all strongly oppose the permanent tax hike in S. 1660. This is why a growing group of Democrats vocally oppose this legislation, and why I oppose proceeding to it.

Since I joined the Senate 9 months ago, I have maintained my strong belief that Democrats and Republicans should work together to pass policies proven to boost economic growth like pro-growth tax and regulatory reform, lowering barriers to free trade, and cutting spending to avert our looming debt crisis. Unfortunately, the huge tax increases on job creators and more debt-financed stimulus spending in the American Jobs Act would move our Nation in squarely the wrong direction.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this evening, I cast my vote in favor of the Senate moving forward with critical job-creation legislation. With 61,000 Rhode Islanders and millions of Americans currently looking for jobs, we must take swift action to help put people back to work. Sadly, as they have all-too-many times this Congress, Republicans chose to obstruct our efforts by blocking us from even debating the American Jobs Act.

This filibuster is particularly disappointing because the American Jobs Act, as introduced in the Senate by Leader REID, represents a balanced and already-tested approach to job creation. Indeed, the bill includes a host of provisions that have received wide bipartisan support in the past. It may not be the exact bill each of us would

draft on our own, but it is a thoughtful and reasonable place to begin working on a Senate jobs plan.

I say the bill is "balanced" because it includes a full range of job-creating provisions from tax credits to help businesses hire, to infrastructure programs that will put people to work updating and upgrading our roads, bridges, and schools.

In addition to being "balanced," I say the American Jobs Act is "tested" because it includes programs that have worked in the past. For example, the Federal Highway Administration estimated that \$1 billion invested in our highways supports about 28,000 jobs. That means that the President's proposed investment of \$27 billion would generate or save over 750,000 jobs. In addition to the upfront investment, the bill would deposit another \$10 billion in a National Infrastructure Bank which could leverage the money with private investments to create hundreds of thousands of additional jobs. We know how well the National Infrastructure Bank would work from the experiences of local revolving funds like Rhode Island's Clean Water Finance Agency.

We also know that funds provided by the bill would prevent hundreds of thousands of teachers, police officers, and firefighters from losing their jobs. According to the Department of Education, \$10 billion in emergency funds provided last summer have already spared 114,000 teachers' jobs. The \$35 billion included in the American Jobs Act would keep hundreds of thousands of additional teachers and first responders from getting pink slips. A lot of small businesses count on teachers and firefighters and police officers with paychecks coming in to do business.

We are not just talking about statistics in this debate. The millions of jobs that would be created or preserved under the American Jobs Act would hit home for families who have been trying to find work for so long.

Just last week, I held a telephone town hall with Rhode Islanders from all across our State. We took questions from folks on issues from jobs to the future of Medicare and Social Security. There was one call in particular that really stuck with me. It was from a woman named Diane in Narragansett. Diane, a Marine veteran, and her husband are both out of work and struggling to put food on the table for their three young children. Her husband is a trained heavy equipment operator and welder has taken temporary employment as a landscaper and a fisherman, but can not find a steady paycheck. They have missed bill payments and have struggled to keep a roof over their heads. On the call Diane said, "[o]ur dream of owning a house is shot out the window . . . [We] don't know where to go [We] don't know what else to do." Diane and her husband are hard-working people doing their best to survive in a frustratingly sluggish economic recovery. They are just asking for a fair chance to provide for their

kids and reclaim their portion of the American dream. We owe it to Diane and her family to set aside our differences and focus on getting something done to create jobs for the American people. It is not too late for us to work together to help solve our Nation's jobs crisis. Let us cut the politics and delay tactics and begin that critical work.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for 5 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING STEVE JOBS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I join my colleagues and so many around the world in paying tribute to Apple chairman and cofounder Steve Jobs, the Silicon Valley pioneer who died at age 56 after a long, brave fight with pancreatic cancer. I send my deepest condolences to Steve Jobs' family and friends on this devastating loss.

Steve was a California icon and one of America's greatest innovators who changed the way we work, communicate, and live our daily lives. Billions of people around the world have been touched by the power of his ideas.

His true genius lay in knowing what consumers wanted and needed before they themselves knew it, and then giving them simple, elegant products to meet those needs. Many of us who never knew we needed an iPad or an iPod now can't do without them.

Steve was a Californian through and through: He was born in San Francisco, raised in Los Altos, and changed the world from Cupertino. He embodied California's entrepreneurial spirit of creativity and optimism. In the process, he created millions of jobs in industries that he himself helped to create.

Even in the face of a deadly disease, Steve never lost his grace, his sense of humor, and his optimism. In a commencement address at Stanford University in 2005, he talked openly about his illness and urged graduates to devote their lives to following their passions. "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life," he told them. "Don't be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."

These were the principles he lived by. This was the guiding philosophy that helped create a revolution in communications. And these are the lessons that still inspire so many all across the world.

All of us are deeply grateful to Steve Jobs, who showed us once again how one person really can change the world.

IRAN CAPTIVE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I draw the Senate's attention to a troubling situation abroad. By now, many following the news have heard of the name Youcef Nadarkhani. Pastor Youcef is a Christian in Iran who has been sentenced to death for refusing to deny his faith. He was originally arrested in October 2009 while attempting to register his church. He allegedly questioned the Muslim monopoly on the religious instruction of children in the state.

To Iran, his crime is his Christian faith and evangelism, and the punishment is death. For as many problems as we face in America, we are blessed that this is not one of them. The American Center for Law and Justice and other national groups have been diligently working on the case since it was first reported earlier this year. At any moment, Pastor Youcef could be executed without notice to his family or the public. I would like to take this time to add my name to the list of those calling for his immediate, unconditional release.

This past weekend, Iran began to claim that Pastor Youcef's crimes were not of religion but of rape and threats to national security. These new allegations appear to be a new and unfounded attempt to justify his execution. None of these crimes were mentioned in his trial over the past 2 years.

While "religious freedom" may be the law of the land in Iran, it is certainly not the practice. This audience is well aware of the persecution of religious minorities and Christians abroad. We should not forget the plight of religious minorities throughout this region, especially the Coptic Christians in Egypt, Chaldo-Assyrian Christians in Iraq, the dwindling Christian population in the Holy Land, and other religious minorities in the Middle East.

I believe we can and we must do more to advance religious freedom abroad. Earlier this year, in coordination with Congressman FRANK WOLF in the House and my Senate colleague, Mr. LEVIN, I introduced the Near East and South Central Asia Religious Freedom Act. The bill creates a Special Envoy on religious freedom in the State Department to monitor the status of religious minorities in these particularly vulnerable regions. I am sincerely committed to this effort and believe that it is essential to promoting the God-given right to liberty around the world. I am hopeful that the Senate can soon join the House in passing this important legislation.

I ask that other Members of the Senate join me in this call to save Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani's life and condemn Iran's denial of the universal right to religious freedom.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE WASHINGTON PARISH FAIR

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, located on the eastern edge of Louisiana,

Washington Parish plays a central role in celebrating our State's unique culture and history. Every October, residents and leaders of the parish host the annual Washington Parish Fair, which marks its 100th anniversary this month.

This quiet but remarkable parish is known for its agriculture, its scenic rivers, and its thriving workforce, which spans across a number of industries, including paper and timber production. Once the center of the dairy industry, the area boasts a relatively low unemployment rate, with nearly 75 percent of its workforce belonging to the community's private sector.

The parish is also known for its genuine hospitality. Its residents volunteer tirelessly for the annual Washington Parish Fair, which is believed to be the largest fair of its kind in the country. The 5-day event, which began in 1911, now attracts families from all over the State. They spend the weekend enjoying the wide range of activities the fair has to offer—including a livestock show, a rodeo and carnival rides—while taking in the unique Louisiana scenery.

This popular event is a model of the community spirit and a prime example of the cultural and economic advancement that can be achieved when neighbors work together for a common goal. Every year, Washington Parish leaders and residents commit themselves to the success of the event, and I commend them for their efforts to continue such a first-rate Louisiana tradition.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, as September ended, so did Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. While it is important to set aside a month for special attention to this epidemic, we must not forget that childhood obesity is a year-round battle.

The facts about childhood obesity are startling. Obesity rates have more than tripled in the last 30 years. In Ohio, more than 30 percent of children and adolescents are overweight or obese. Our children living with obesity experience lifelong health problems, including type 2 diabetes, heart problems, and bone and joint problems.

Combating childhood obesity might seem like an uphill battle, but with national attention on the issue, we can meet this urgent need. And communities across Ohio and the Nation are doing their part. Public and private partnerships are joining forces to unite in the fight against childhood obesity.

We see it with the U.S. Surgeon General's healthy youth for a healthy future initiative promoting healthy eating and physical activity to the Do Right! Campaign in communities in greater Cincinnati. We see it with Let's Move! events throughout the State, and collaborations between Federal and State governments and local communities, organizations, and individuals.

Last year, the Senate passed landmark child nutrition legislation, the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, to help promote health and reduce childhood obesity. This bill will improve the nutritional quality of school meals through an increase in Federal reimbursement for school lunches. It also establishes national nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools so that vending machine food and snacks in the a la carte line are healthy and nutritious. The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act will connect more children to healthy, locally grown produce through farm-to-school programs with the dual benefit of making sure children know how their food is grown and supporting Ohio farmers.

Also worth noting is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's, USDA, progress in updating the nutrition standards for school meals so they are in line with current nutrition science. I commend the USDA for its efforts and urge it to finalize these new school lunch rules quickly so that children across the country get the benefit of more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

I am also proud of the proactive efforts of Ohio hospitals in acknowledging their ability to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity.

The Cleveland Clinic's 5 to Go! Program is a comprehensive childhood wellness program. A partnership with family health centers, hospitals, schools, and neighborhood partners, 5 to Go! is working in Cuyahoga County to keep children healthy by encouraging them to get 1 hour of exercise a day and consume more fruits and vegetables in their meals.

University Hospitals Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital is a national leader in addressing childhood diabetes—one of the more serious side effects of obesity. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rainbow is home to the Center of Excellence for Childhood Diabetes, Activity, and Nutrition. Rainbow is holding workshops to educate school nurses on childhood diabetes and hosting events with patients and their family focusing on breakthroughs in treatment and disease management.

By teaming up with the Kohl's Community Youth Fitness Program, Akron Children's Hospital is teaching 8 to 13-year-olds about healthy fitness and eating habits through participation in activities and games.

In Toledo, ProMedica is focusing its attention on community-based nutrition programs. The Fields of Green Program includes everything from hydroponic and community gardens tended to by neighborhood children to a scholarship program for high school students. And, through a partnership with the YMCA and the United Way, the Summer Feeding Program has increased the number of meals served to children under 18 from 1,500 to over 45,000 in only 1 year.