

school programs that help underprivileged children to compete in the world. They have cut art and music classes and afterschool activities that keep students engaged and prevent everything from high school dropouts, delinquency, to even teen pregnancy.

While all of these cuts have been difficult, things could be much worse. The Recovery Act and the Education Jobs Fund provided money to keep 422,000 teachers in the classroom for a year. School districts across the country used that Federal funding to keep class sizes small and ensure students are given the world-class education they deserve. They used this funding to ensure America's children are trained for the jobs of today and prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

Still, as the economy continues to struggle, so do State and local budgets. That means schools that are already doing more with less will continue to be at risk. Although Democrats have saved hundreds of thousands of teacher jobs already, schools have still lost 300,000 educators since this recession began.

And the brain drain could even get worse. State and local budgets could cost as many as 280,000 teacher jobs next year unless we do more. That is why President Obama proposed we invest \$30 billion as part of the American Jobs Act to keep our schools well staffed and to ensure our children are well educated. This is not deficit spending. This is money that will be paid for. Republicans blocked that job-creating legislation which would have put 2 million people to work in classrooms and at construction sites across the country. But Democrats have not given up on keeping our schools fully staffed. Nearly 300,000 teacher jobs—I repeat—are at risk, and so is the quality of our education system.

Unless school districts get a helping hand, many will be forced to make more difficult choices between laying off educators and going without schoolbooks, paper, and other supplies.

Democrats will pursue the President's plan to keep nearly 400,000 teacher and support staff where they belong, in the classroom—a \$30 billion investment, fully paid for, which will help school districts not only avoid layoffs but also rehire tens of thousands of teachers who have already lost their jobs because of budget cuts.

It will also commit \$5 billion to retaining the police, firefighters, and first responders who work so hard to keep our communities safe, and to rehiring those who have already been laid off in these tough economic times. Our economy cannot afford to lose more jobs. Our communities cannot afford to lose the men and women who keep us safe and secure. Our Nation cannot afford to lose the competitive edge a world-class education system gives us in a constantly changing world. Democrats are committed to protecting the heart of education Bart Giamatti spoke of, the talented teachers who will shape our civil society.

Mr. President, will the Chair announce the business of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 4 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I 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. MCCAIN. Mr. 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.

JOBS THROUGH GROWTH ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the Jobs Through Growth Act that was recently introduced by most of my Republican colleagues on this side of the aisle. I wish to highlight the hard work done by my colleagues Senators PAUL and PORTMAN in putting this bill together.

This bill is a commonsense alternative to the plan being championed by President Obama and Majority Leader REID. The differences between our plan and theirs are that we want to create jobs through growth and they want to create jobs through government spending. We believe business creates jobs in America.

It is clear from the President's stimulus 2 that he believes government creates jobs, so there is a fundamental difference between our proposal and theirs. What they have proposed is another stimulus. We tried that. We saw the movie before. It did not work. It added to our debt and deficit. We lost jobs.

My colleagues and I are putting forth a plan to create jobs through sound policies. Most economists will tell you that economic growth is a fundamental part of long-term sustainable job creation, and that is what the plan does. It contains key components—spending reforms, including a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution, to give job creators the certainty that Washington will not continue to grow unchecked.

Almost all of us understand from experience over the years that unless the United States of America, our government, is required—as every State and every town and every county and every city in America is required—to have a balanced budget, we will continue the

mass deficits that mortgage our children and our grandchildren's futures.

Republican and Democratic Presidents alike over the years have asked for enhanced rescission authority—what we used to call the line-item veto—that would give the President of the United States the ability to eliminate unnecessary, wasteful, earmarked, porkbarrel spending provisions without having to veto the entire bill.

We believe these two measures can bring about a fiscal discipline in this Congress and in this Nation that has been sadly lacking for a long time and has given us the massive debts and deficits—a deficit of nearly \$50,000 for every man, woman, and child in America today.

We need tax reform. Is there anyone in America who doesn't believe that the Tax Code, which is this high, doesn't need to be reformed? Our proposal is simple: Cut the corporate tax rate from 35 to 25; create 3 categories of tax rates in America, and close the loopholes, eliminate the subsidies, and let's give Americans a Tax Code they can trust and believe in—even understand.

Let's bring home the \$1.4 trillion in foreign earnings that are trapped overseas in countries where U.S.-based multinational companies do business. Why won't they bring the money home? It is because they have to tax it at 35 percent. It is not that complicated.

Last week, Senator HAGAN and I introduced a bill that would provide incentives for that money to come home on the proviso that they create jobs in America and invest in America. According to a recent study done by the chamber of commerce, the repatriation of this \$1.4 trillion in corporate earnings currently trapped overseas can result in increasing the gross domestic product by roughly \$360 billion and would create as many as 2.9 million new U.S. jobs.

I must say, recently from the other side there was a study that showed this money would have no effect. How in the world could you possibly believe that if you brought \$1.4 trillion back home to America it would have no effect? I think it probably shows you can have a study that shows there was indeed a landing of aliens in a city in New Mexico a long time ago.

Reforming the regulatory process costs taxpayers nothing, but it does more for creating jobs than any stimulus program possibly could. There is nothing more constraining to job growth than the adversarial relationship between business and government. Talk to any businessperson, small or large, and they will tell you why they are sitting on large sums of money and not creating jobs and not investing. It is because they don't know which regulation is coming down next that they are going to have to comply with.

Please, I ask my colleagues and my friends, go ask the business people and they will tell you that. They will tell you that the fear and specter of additional regulations has an incredibly

negative affect on their desire to invest and hire. Lifting the prohibitions on offshore energy exploration will immediately create jobs, drive investment, and reduce our Nation's dependence on foreign sources of oil.

According to the American Energy Alliance, which is a pro-exploratory group, admittedly, permanently lifting the offshore moratoria would result in 1.2 million new U.S. jobs.

Of course, we need to give the President the fast track authority to negotiate trade agreements. I point out that the President is now on his "listening tour," at taxpayers' expense. He was taking credit for the passage of these three free-trade agreements for Panama, Colombia, and South Korea. It only took nearly 3 years.

As far as our bill is concerned, we have a statement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce:

Yesterday, a group of Senators, including John McCain, Rob Portman and Rand Paul, introduced the "Jobs Through Growth Act." This legislation marks a departure from a "government knows best" approach and instead empowers the private sector to rescue our economy. As the Chamber outlined in its Six-Point Jobs Plan, alleviating regulatory burdens, tax uncertainty, and restoring confidence to invest and grow jobs is the best way to get the country back on track. This bill is a step in the right direction and includes a number of the same broad ideas for creation as the Chamber's plan.

It goes on to say that "comprehensive tax reform is critical to job creation." They believe that reforming the regulatory process is necessary for businesses to begin hiring again, and they also argue for the expanded drilling offshore.

You will hear from various liberal think tanks that we don't create jobs, that this is not a good thing to do, et cetera. But the fact is the chamber of commerce, which I think well knows about job creation, should be paid attention to.

A piece was written in the National Review Online by Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a noted economist and former head of the OMB. In the interest of full disclosure, he was an adviser of mine. He wrote the following:

Senate Republicans have just introduced the "Real Jobs Plan." As I've long argued, an effective jobs "plan" is a commitment to a sustained environment for long-term growth. The President's failed proposals have repeatedly proven that "temporary and targeted" stimulus is insufficient. Moreover, his latest effort displays more interest in politics than growth.

Senators McCain, Paul, and Portman have proposed a plan that effectively targets job creation at a time when we desperately need it by incentivizing growth and repealing the job-killing Affordable Care Act and Dodd-Frank law. There is a lot here to like.

Still, inevitably, there will be a war of numbers in which progressives trot out numbers from Keynesian business cycle models to argue that the strategy won't work. To anticipate the debate, here are some highlights of the Real Jobs Plan and some estimates of the jobs impact:

1. Lower the corporate rate tax to 25 percent, resulting in an additional 581,000 jobs per year, on average.

2. Reduce the tax on foreign earnings brought back to the U.S., resulting in 2.9 million jobs.

3. Repeal Dodd-Frank, estimated to cost the U.S. 4.6 million jobs by 2015.

On the so-called Dodd-Frank act, the whole purpose of the Dodd-Frank act was to make sure that no institution in America would ever be too big to fail. My friends, tell me that these institutions aren't too big to fail. We know they have gotten bigger, and we know they are too big to fail. If we went through a similar crisis, we know, because of their size, we would again be forced to use taxpayer dollars to bail them out. The fact is that the Dodd-Frank bill has been a complete failure, as many of us predicted. One of the reasons is because it didn't address the phasing out of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. It was the housing crisis that started this collapse, and until the day the housing market stabilizes, we will not begin to emerge from this horrible economic situation America finds itself in today.

4. Repeal the ACA, estimated to cost the U.S. economy at least 800,000 jobs.

5. Lift the offshore drilling moratoria, resulting in 1.2 million U.S. jobs.

6. Prohibit the EPA from regulating greenhouse gases, estimated to cost the economy 1.4 million jobs by 2014.

And, of course, giving the President trade preference authority.

Finally, I will point this out in the Wall Street Journal Political Diary, October 14, 2011: Finally, a GOP Growth Plan.

Senators John McCain and Rand Paul [and Rob Portman] have drafted an economic growth blueprint that they hope to be the rallying cry of all congressional Republicans.

The White House and congressional Democrats hope to use the Senate rejection of Obama jobs plan this week as a campaign issue against "do nothing Republicans." Senate Democrats have crowed that "Republicans have no jobs plan of their own," but that's not true any longer. Senators John McCain of Arizona and Rand Paul of Kentucky [and Rob Portman] have drafted a comprehensive economic growth blueprint that they hope will be the rallying cry of all congressional Republicans in the weeks ahead. We obtained a copy of the draft document which includes tax cuts, a balanced budget amendment, ObamaCare repeal, and a regulatory freeze. . . .

The plan, which would cut corporate tax rates to 25 from 35 is partially paid for by offering a reduced 5 percent tax on repatriated capital. . . .

The plan won't get close to the 60 votes necessary in the Senate. But it does establish a polar star for Republicans to head toward. Republicans got a nice lift for the plan when a Chamber of Commerce poll asked 1,300 business owners across the country whether they support the GOP plan of "permanent tax cuts and less regulation," or the Democratic plan of temporary payroll tax cuts and public work spending. More than eight of 10 said they favor the Republican approach.

As they say, let the games begin. Today, the President of the United States, in his visit to areas of the country that have a lot to do, in the view of many, with the upcoming electoral cal-

endar, attacked our plan and attacked it rather vociferously. In fact, I was somewhat taken aback, since the President and his spokesperson had billed his trip as a taxpayer-paid visit. In his remarks, the President was very strongly condemning of the plan that we have put forward. In fact, remember, my colleagues and friends, the President made these remarks on a taxpayer paid-for, riding-in-a-Canadian-bus visit for the next 3 days. This is what, on his listening tour, the President said:

Now it turns out that the Republicans have a plan, too. I want to be fair. They call—they put forward this plan last week. They called it the real American Jobs Act, the real one. That's what they called it, just in case you were wondering. So let's take a look at what the Republican American Jobs Act looks like. Turns out that the Republican plan boils down to a few basic ideas. They want to gut regulations. They want to let Wall Street do whatever it wants. They want to drill more, and they want to repeal health care reform. That's their jobs plan.

Et cetera, et cetera. So on the taxpayer-paid dime, the President is now traveling and attacking the Republican plan—obviously, I think, unfairly.

By the way, there is an article dated October 16 by Richard Wolfe in USA Today:

President Obama will kick off a three-day bus trip through small towns in politically competitive North Carolina and Virginia Monday. But White House officials insist the trip is about jobs, not votes. So much so, in fact, they convened a conference call to reiterate that point several times, pointing out that the trip is fully on the taxpayers' dime, not the Republicans reelection campaign.

So the President has taken to the road, and he spent a number of minutes attacking our plan. I understand that. I think he has, certainly in a political venue, the right and privilege to do that. I think the question might be, though, is that appropriate on the taxpayers' dime, since it is clearly campaigning. I must say again, I have never seen an uglier bus than the Canadian one. He is traveling around on a Canadian bus touting American jobs.

One of the reasons Americans and I and my colleagues are a bit skeptical is because we have seen this movie before. We saw this movie before, and it feels a bit like something we have heard before. In fact, let me read a few quotes. We all know the failure of the last stimulus bill. We all know the President and his economic advisers said, if we passed the last stimulus bill, unemployment would be at a maximum of 8 percent, and it is obviously, we all know, now stuck at over 9. They said it would create millions of jobs, but we all know it didn't. They said it would stimulate our economy, and we know it hasn't. So let me read a couple quotes. This one was February 10, 2009, from President Obama:

It's a plan that will save or create up to four million jobs over the next two years . . . and the jobs of firefighters, teachers, nurses, and police officers that would otherwise be eliminated if we don't provide states with some relief.

This is from President Obama during the middle of 2009:

We've created and saved, as you said, Joe, at least 150,000 jobs.

This is a quote from Vice President BIDEN, where he said in "18 months" stimulus will "create 3.5 million jobs . . . literally drop-kicks us out of this recession."

This is a monumental project, but I think it's doable. But I just think we got to stay on top (inaudible) and we got to stay on top of that on a weekly basis. Because this is about getting this out and spent in 18 months to create 3.5 million jobs and do—to set—tee this up so the rest of the good work that's being done here literally drop-kicks us out of this recession and we begin to grow again and begin to employ people again.

Those were the remarks of the Vice President at a Recover Plan Implementation Meeting held on February 25, 2009.

My alltime favorite quote is from August 24, 2009, from Vice President BIDEN:

In my wildest dreams, I never thought it would work this well.

Let me repeat that:

In my wildest dreams, I never thought it would work this well.

In my wildest dreams, I hope the American people will understand what we are doing with the President's plan and that we will be voting on pieces that probably even a simple majority of the Senate wouldn't have voted for. It is the same thing they tried in 2009 and 2010 and was steadfastly rejected by the American people in the overwhelming vote that took place last November.

What I hope is that once the President gets off the campaign trail, we will sit down and come to an agreement in some areas. All of us agree that simplification of the Tax Code is something the American people want and deserve. All of us know we should try to do what we can to bring home that \$1.4 trillion which is now parked overseas. All of us agree that offshore drilling is something we need to accelerate as quickly as possible and do it safely. All of us should agree that middle-income and lower income Americans are the ones who need help the most.

While I am here, I would like to point out that one of the key elements we spent a lot of time on last year—many hours I spent on the floor of this Senate—was trying to combat the program that is now known as ObamaCare or health reform. We find out now that one of the key elements of this health care reform—which I will politely call health care reform—was a program called the CLASS Act.

The CLASS Act was to provide long-term care for senior Americans, which is certainly a worthwhile goal. Thanks to a Member of the Senate, who is no longer here, Senator Gregg, a provision was put in that said the reality of the CLASS Act programs had to match the promises as a matter of law. In other words, Health and Human Services had

to provide an actuarial analysis of insurer solvency throughout the 75-year cost of the program. In other words, the Health and Human Services Department was bound by the amendment put through on the floor by Senator Gregg—the former Senator from New Hampshire. So after flailing around for 19 months, the Secretary of Health and Human Services announced it would shutter a voluntary long-term care insurance program that was included in the health care law and throw the issue back to Congress.

It is unfortunate we did not have that same provision in the rest of the bill; otherwise, the whole thing probably would have been junked by now. But because of that amendment, the administration has been forced to junk the CLASS Act. Let me quote from the Wall Street Journal, which reads:

At a minimum the GOP could begin by repealing the Class program altogether, since its legal authority is still intact. "One should never leave a partly loaded gun on the table even if most of the chambers are empty or just has blanks," writes the American Enterprise Institute's Tom Miller. He also suggests attaching a few of the more destructive provisions and forcing Democrats to defend them, such as Mr. Orszag's Independent Payment Advisory Board of 15 political appointees who have brought unaccountable powers to control health care markets and health care.

Our suggestion is for a Gregg-like amendment that applies to the entire health law and not simply Class. If reality can't match the rhetoric that accompanied the bill—about fiscal responsibility, bending the cost curve, keeping your health care if you like your health care and all the other false promises—then, legally, it should be repealed like Class. Call it a truth-in-advertising clause. ObamaCare would collapse in a heartbeat.

I hope we will begin to debate whether the CLASS Act—which now the Health and Human Services Secretary has announced is undoable—should be repealed from the law itself and whether there are other provisions such as that which Senator Gregg, in his foresight, was able to force into the bill at the time of its passage.

By the way, a little more on the CLASS Act. One of the major reasons why it was included was to distort the numbers as to how much money would or would not be saved in the passage of health care reform. Because, clearly, for the first early years—since people would be contributing rather than taking out funds because of retirement age—it would appear to have a significant cost savings impact. Now we will be talking about the real cost impact of the health care reform bill.

I hope in the weeks ahead we can engage in vigorous debate on how we can move this country forward. There are clearly philosophical differences between the two sides, but I hope there are areas where we can find common ground.

The housing crisis is still with us in America. I noticed an article over the weekend in the New York Times that Fannie Mae saw fit to send a huge

number of people to some convention in Chicago on the taxpayers' dime. Fannie and Freddie are still responsible for about 90 percent of the mortgages in America—a corrupt institution. Yet Americans, including those in my State of Arizona, are still badly hurting.

I hope we can address the issues that affect this Nation. I hope we can sit down together and work out at least some agreements—such as reform of the Tax Code and others—but, at the same time, we need to, at some point, address the housing issue in America. Until we do—until we get housing costs stabilized in America—I greatly fear—and I see my colleague from Florida whose State has also been very badly hurt by this housing crisis—until we fix the fundamental problems, I fear we will continue to experience very difficult economic times for our citizens.

I note the presence of my colleague—the great astronaut and fine Senator—so I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I could spend my whole time talking about the housing crisis—as the Senator from Arizona has so appropriately commented—that has hit his State and mine and many others. I happen to agree it is going to be hard for us to recover economically until we can start to work off this huge inventory of houses out there and the dire economic straits it has put the owners of those houses in.

It is a truth in America that so often our family assets are in our home. When that home goes away—because you can't sell it or its value has plummeted and the bank is coming after you and you can't get loans for your small business—then people are going to be hurt. That is what is happening to our people right now.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for a question? I know he has another subject he wants to address, but would he yield for a question?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Of course.

Mr. MCCAIN. Isn't one of the fundamental problems in the housing crisis, in the Senator's State and my State and particularly California, Nevada, and others that were the crest of the wave, that we should have made—and still should be making—an effort to give people a mortgage they can afford to make the payments on rather than throwing them out of their home or have the home empty?

Maricopa County, AZ, has the largest number of vacant homes of any county in America. I will bet in that top 10 list are counties in the State of Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Indeed, one of the areas hardest hit in the entire country is southwest Florida, in and around Fort Myers. I note the Senator's comments are very accurate. We need to find a way for people to stay in their homes, afford their payments, and see what that does not only for the individual homeowner but what it does

for the neighborhood. It keeps people in the homes. The weeds don't start growing. The values of the rest of the homes in the neighborhood don't plummet because the house is now vacant and perhaps ransacked. There is kind of a spiral downward when people are forced out.

So we need a program that would come in and make the mortgage as affordable as the homeowner can work out. Yet we find, in many cases, the banks don't want to do that or there is not a governmental incentive for the banks or the homeowner to do that. We have missed out on that.

Several years ago, when this crisis started, I implored the Secretary of the Treasury to look at exactly what was happening, and they came up with a program whereby they were going to give some cushion of 5 percent of a mortgage that was underwater.

In the Senator's State and my State, if a home is just 5 percent underwater, you are rather fortunate because a home today 20, 25, and 30 percent underneath the value of the first mortgage is not uncommon. That is the problem we have not addressed.

There have been some other good things. There are now programs coming out on small business, in trying to get money into small business. Even though some of the banks did not want to take the Federal money, even though it went to their capital, we are starting to see some signs of life there. We are starting to see some signs of life, I am told by the Florida Association of Realtors, that sales are occurring all over the State, not just certain parts of the State, such as Miami. There is a huge influx of Brazilian investors coming in and absorbing the condo market. But it is not just Miami, it is the entire State that sales are occurring.

They are, of course, sales at rock-bottom prices, but they are beginning to occur. We need to accelerate and give assistance to this rejuvenation of the real estate market. Until the housing market recovers, we are not going to have an economic recovery out of this recession.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator.

LAURA POLLAN, DAMAS DE BLANCO

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I came to the Senate floor because over the weekend a very noble lady in Cuba passed away of a heart attack, and I want to tell you about her.

Her name is Laura Pollan. She founded the group Ladies in White, Damas de Blanco. She did so to protest the brutal Castro regime in Cuba, and her protest was specifically the jailing of 75 people in a crackdown on dissidents in 2003, one of which was her husband. Many of those who were imprisoned were married to the ones who became known as the Ladies in White, including Senora Pollan's own husband, Hector Maseda.

Since 2003, Laura had gathered the group on most weekends in central Ha-

vana after church. Everybody would wear white and they would hold gladiolas, a flower that is typical in warm climates. They would stage their marches, and they would demand the release of their loved ones, since 2003 when their husbands were jailed.

Damas de Blanco defied this brutal dictatorship, the Castro regime. For its human rights work, the European Parliament awarded the group the 2005 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought. Just this year, the U.S. Government gave Damas de Blanco the Human Rights Defender Award for "exceptional valor in protecting human rights in the face of government repression."

Damas de Blanco succeeded earlier this year—succeeded. In the face of this brutal dictatorship, it succeeded when the last of the 75 imprisoned were finally released, including Laura's husband. She and her husband only had 8 months together before she died of a heart attack last week.

Despite this group's achievement, Laura Pollan lamented earlier this year that:

As long as the government is around, there will be prisoners . . . while they've let some go, they've put others in jail. It is a never-ending story.

Mr. President, it is a never-ending story, and isn't it typical; here is a regime that still holds an American citizen there now for 2 years, Alan Gross. Alan Gross is in ill health. His daughter here in the States has cancer. Is this regime showing any kind of compassion? Of course not. Did it show any kind of compassion to those Ladies in White and their husbands when they swept in, in the middle of the night, scooped them up and put them in prison because they dared to speak out their free thoughts?

It reminds us of another regime, one on the other side of the globe, Iran, which still imprisons an American, Bob Levinson, a former FBI agent. They still deny they have him, and yet there is plenty of evidence they do have him. And yet we wait. In Bob Levinson's case, a wife and seven children wait, and have waited for years and years.

So we say, like Damas de Blanco—just like they said they will continue to challenge the regime until the day all the Cuban people are able to enjoy the blessings of freedom—that is all they want. It is so sad that because of the ties between America and Cuba, with so many families having been split, with it being only 90 miles away from Key West, there is a brutal dictatorial regime that still imprisons its people. But there is one thing they can't imprison: they can't imprison their minds and their yearning for freedom.

Mr. President, 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. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for

the quorum call be rescinded and that I be allowed to speak in morning business for as much time as I may consume.

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

THE CLASS ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, late last week the American taxpayer got some very good news, and that was that the administration announced they were not going to move forward with implementing the CLASS Act. It was a stunning end for something many of us have believed is a fiscal timebomb for our country. They acknowledged it is simply not workable. In fact, HHS Secretary Katherine Sebelius said, "Despite our best analytical efforts, I do not see a viable path forward for CLASS implementation at this time."

The Washington Post went on to say that "the Obama administration cut a major planned benefit from the 2010 law on Friday, announcing that a program to offer Americans insurance for long-term care was simply unworkable."

The Hill reported that "HHS officials acknowledged that CLASS fell apart simply because it was too flawed to salvage."

From Politico: "... a stunning end to a financially troubled long-term care insurance program and a major setback to the health care reform law."

Even the New York Times editorialized that "it was too costly and would not work."

This is good news for the American taxpayer. This is something many of us argued was the conclusion that inevitably people would come to, when this was discussed and debated as part of the health care reform bill over a year ago. In fact, on December 4, 2009, I offered an amendment to repeal the CLASS Act.

It was then offered as one of the pay-fors for the President's health care reform bill. At that time, it was said it would generate somewhere on the order of \$70 billion in additional revenue that could be used to pay for the health care bill. More recent estimates of that number are somewhere in the order of \$86 billion that would be generated in the first 10 years. One of the reasons for that was, of course, people would begin to pay premiums even though they would not start demanding benefits until later. Even at that time, there was tremendous concern that this would run up deficits, blow up deficits in the outyears when you got outside of that 10-year window; that after people were through paying their premiums and started demanding benefits, this would get into sort of a downward death spiral and would never pay for itself. That was a conclusion many people were drawing already, at the time, that there was such a rush to pass health care reform through here and to come up with ways to pay for it, that