

State have expressed to me. I rise to share my frustration.

It is not just the frustration you may feel, as I have felt presiding over this body, when for hours at a time it is empty, when there is such precious and important work that we can and should be doing to get the people of this great country back to work, to strengthen our national security, to lay the groundwork for a strong recovery, to deal with the hundreds of issues this body should be dealing with. I am expressing my frustration at our inability to work together and to make real progress.

Today, I have had the blessing of being visited by a number of Delawareans for lunch, for business visits, for just some constituent catchup. As I do almost every day, I commuted down from Delaware this morning. As I have heard from folks on the train, as I have heard from folks in my office, as I have heard from folks who have written and called my offices in Delaware and in Washington, they are puzzled and they are frustrated. They don't understand why we can't move forward.

To paraphrase the good Senator from Missouri who just spoke, there is a no-brainer right in front of us, and it is the extension of the payroll tax cut. It is something that at least apparently has the support of both parties in both Houses. It is something a number of economists have said is an important contributor to the modest but steady economic growth that is helping pull America out of this terrible great recession.

So I ask: Why is it we sit here stalled, unclear on when we can proceed to a vote, to a consideration of a clean payroll tax cut? There have been a whole series of efforts to get us to the floor for a vote to an extension of the payroll tax cut. This is a simple enough matter.

Working Americans all over this country—I believe 160 million of them—will be hit with an increase in their payroll tax rate at the end of this month, just a few days now away, unless we act. My good friend Senator CASEY of Pennsylvania has suggested several versions of a payroll tax cut that would build upon and strengthen the payroll tax cut that the President proposed and this body passed last year. The Casey compromise that has most recently been considered and debated in this body would put up to \$1,500 in the pockets of hard-working Americans all over this country and would contribute as much as 1.5 percent to GDP growth in the coming year. But in the last 2 weeks, we have seen our colleagues on the other side of the aisle four times block our efforts through filibusters and dilatory tactics to attempt to get to a payroll tax cut extension. The first Republican version was opposed by 26 Senate Republicans; the second version opposed by 25.

So on some level I have to ask, what are we doing? Since when do Republicans openly oppose tax cuts? I have

been in this Senate just over 1 year. As you know, I was sworn in last November. In my freshman year, I have seen many moments when we have been unable to reach reasonable compromise, when we have been unable to move forward, and when we have flirted with having to shut down the whole Federal Government because we couldn't reach an appropriate compromise with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Now we, once again, stand here this Wednesday, knowing that unless we can act in partnership, we will shut down this government on Friday without a continuing resolution.

Last night, the House acted. They passed this payroll tax cut extension and sent it over to us, and I am puzzled as to why we are not moving to it on the floor today. I will tell you that when we get to move to it, I will vote against it, and I know many others here will as well. Why? Because H.R. 3630, which passed the House last night, is not just a clean extension of the payroll tax cut bill—in fact, far from it. It is loaded with a whole series of other policy riders, things that have nothing to do with the payroll tax cut extension which House leadership had to do in order to garner enough votes to move it.

Today we should be considering this bill sent to us last night, the Speaker asking us to take it up, and it has a whole series of provisions which I suspect many here and at home don't know about. I will briefly consider a few of them.

It undermines health care reform by punishing low- and middle-income families whose economic circumstances changed during the year. It cuts 40 weeks of unemployment benefits from the 99 weeks we would like to extend to 54 weeks. It overrides the President's decisionmaking process on the Keystone XL Pipeline—in my view, simply to embarrass the President—and it amends the Clean Air Act to block EPA's proposed rules on toxic air pollution from industrial boilers.

It would also freeze Federal pay through 2013 and impose a triple contribution, mandatory contribution to Federal retirement programs, effectively cutting Federal employee pay and taking more than \$53 billion out of the pockets of Federal workers.

To me, in some ways most alarmingly, it allows States to impose drug-testing requirements on employees who have lost their jobs and are seeking unemployment.

In short, what came over to us from the House last night is the furthest thing possible from a clean extension of the payroll tax cut. It is a payroll tax cut with rider after rider sitting on the back of this horse that has weighed it down so greatly, it can clearly hardly move. It is a terrible bill, and in my view we should move to it, dispose of it, and get back to the business of the country.

Last, I am puzzled as to why we are not proceeding to it. My recollection—

and I don't have the joy of sitting here on the floor all the time, but my recollection from what I read and heard is that the Republican leader has twice called on us to move to this bill. I believe he did so twice earlier this week, saying we should put partisanship aside and promptly take up whatever is sent over to us from the House by way of a payroll tax cut extension. I think I quote when I say his comment was:

I think the first thing we need to find out is whether there are the votes in the Senate to pass what the House has passed. And so I'd rather not speculate about what happens later. I'm hoping we are spending our time and energy trying to get this bill passed in the Senate, as well as in the House.

That is a perfectly reasonable attitude. We should proceed to this bill. We are here. We have the bill. We have been waiting almost literally the entire day without making any progress. We need to extend tax cuts for payrolls. We need to extend tax cuts that incentivize clean energy investments. We need to extend tax cuts that can help inspire innovation, research, and development.

There is a whole list of tax cuts that will expire at the end of this year without action. We need to pass the National Defense Authorization Act. We need to pass a continuing resolution to fund this government and the rest of this year's appropriations bills. There are so many important bills to which we must turn.

My sole question is, why, when we tried to proceed to this bill this morning, did the Republican leader object?

I am just a freshman, but I represent a State that is deeply frustrated and puzzled. Since when do Republicans load up a tax cut extension with so many riders that they are afraid to even bring it to a vote on the floor of this Chamber? I am puzzled. I am frustrated.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Wyoming.

THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to speak today in support of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is one of the largest shovel-ready infrastructure projects in the United States. It would bring oil from North Dakota and from Canada to refineries along the gulf coast and in the Midwest. The pipeline would strengthen America's energy security and create tens of thousands of new jobs. These are good-paying jobs. But don't take my word for it, just consider what representatives of organized labor have had to say.

The president of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO said:

[A]ny discussion of the Keystone XL project begins and ends with one word: JOBS.

He went on to say:

Throughout America's Heartland, the Keystone Pipeline represents the prospect for

20,000 immediate jobs . . . without one single dollar of government assistance.

The general president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters said:

The Keystone Pipeline project will offer working men and women a real chance to earn a good wage and support their families in this difficult economic climate.

Consider the remarks of the general president of the Laborers' International Union of North America. He said:

This project . . . is not just a pipeline, but . . . a lifeline for thousands of desperate working men and women.

House Democrats also recognize the importance of this Keystone XL Pipeline. This summer, 47 House Democrats voted in favor of the bill to require a decision on the pipeline by November 1. On October 19, 22 House Democrats wrote a letter to the President. This is what they told President Obama:

America . . . cannot afford to say no to this privately funded . . . jobs-creating infrastructure project.

They went on to say:

It is in our national interest to have a Presidential Permit issued for the Keystone XL Pipeline as soon as possible.

Senate Democrats also support the Keystone XL Pipeline. Senator BAUCUS of Montana said:

We need to put Montanans back to work and cannot afford further delays to the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Senator TESTER, also from Montana, said:

The Keystone Pipeline will create Montana jobs and it should not have to wait 14 months for an up-or-down decision.

Senator MANCHIN of West Virginia said:

I'm for the Keystone Pipeline . . . all the trade unions, everyone's for it. It creates thousands of jobs.

Senator BEGICH and Senator LANDRIEU have also written in support of the pipeline.

Until recently, President Obama suggested that he too believed the pipeline to be in the interests of the United States. On April 6, the President held a townhall event in Pennsylvania. There, he received a question about Canadian oil sands production. In response, the President of the United States discussed the Keystone XL Pipeline. This is what he said:

. . . importing oil from countries that are stable and friendly is a good thing. . . .

Let me repeat. The President of the United States said:

. . . importing oil from countries that are stable and friendly is a good thing. . . .

However, on November 10, the President reversed course, and he showed a different side. After protests from environmentalists, the President decided to punt his decision on the pipeline until after the 2012 Presidential election.

Many in the press say the President delayed his decision so that environmental activists would turn out on election day to support him. If true, the President's decision to delay the

approval of the pipeline was not only political, it was also cynical—cynical because these environmental activists believe they can shut down Canadian oil sands production. They believe they can shut down the production by stopping construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. It simply is not true, and the President knows it. But maybe the President does not want to be honest with these environmental activists. Maybe he just doesn't want to disappoint them. He doesn't want his political base to stay home on election day.

But don't take it from me; consider what Austan Goolsbee had to say. Many Members of this Chamber know he is the former Chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, this White House Council—President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers. This is what he said:

It is a bit naive to think that the tar sands would not be developed if they don't build that pipeline.

Eventually, it's going to be built. It may go to the Pacific, it may go through Nebraska, but it is going to be built somewhere.

Again, Mr. Goolsbee was President Obama's top economic adviser.

Why are the Canadian oil sands going to be developed? Because the oil sands are a huge national asset for Canada, and Canada will not allow that asset to be stranded.

Let's consider the findings of the Canadian Research Institute. This is an independent, not-for-profit research entity that was established in 1975. Its mission is to provide relevant, independent, and objective economic research on energy and environmental issues.

This June, they released a report. It was entitled "Economic Impacts of Staged Development of Oil Sands Projects in Alberta from 2010 to 2035"—a 25-year future look. This report looked at a variety of scenarios, including one in which no new pipeline capacity is built. Under that scenario, the institute estimated that the total impact on Canada's GDP would be about \$2.3 trillion over those 25 years. It also estimated that the compensation for Canadian employees will reach almost \$650 billion over this same period. It estimated that the direct, indirect, and induced employment in Canada will grow from 390,000 jobs to a peak of 490,000 jobs in 2020, just 9 years from now. It also estimated that the royalties to Alberta will go from approximately \$3.6 billion in 2010 to a peak of \$22.6 billion in 2020—in 10 years, from \$3.6 billion to \$22.6 billion in royalties to Alberta.

Again, the Canadian Energy Research Institute made all of these estimates assuming that no additional pipeline capacity will be built. What do these estimates mean? They mean Canada will continue to develop its oil resources whether or not Keystone XL Pipeline or any other pipeline is built. It means the environmental activists

trying to shut down oil sands production are naive at best.

It also means that the President, President Obama, is once again failing to lead, that he once again is failing to be forthright with the American people, and that he is unwilling and failing to make difficult decisions. The President is showing that he thinks his job is really the only job that matters.

Of course we all know Canada will not sit idly by. Canada will add additional pipeline capacity whether or not Keystone XL Pipeline is built.

Canada's Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has said that the decision to delay approval of Keystone XL Pipeline demonstrates "the necessity of making sure that we're able to access Asian markets for our energy products." That is what the Canadian Prime Minister had to say. He was just in Washington last week. Alberta's Premier, Alison Redford, said that the decision to delay approval of the pipeline "is a clear reminder about the strategic importance of diversifying our export markets." "A clear reminder about the strategic importance of diversifying our export markets." In other words, Canada has a tremendous amount of oil, and Canada will ensure that its oil is brought to market. It may go to the United States, it may go to China, it may go to another country, but Canada's oil will be brought to market.

Thus, the question for President Obama is very simple, very straightforward: Is it in America's interests to reduce our dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf and from Venezuela? Is it in America's interest to create tens of thousands of new jobs at a time of 8.6 percent unemployment? The answer is abundantly obvious. The answer, of course, is, yes, it is in America's best interests to reduce our dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf and Venezuela. It is in America's interest to create tens of thousands of new jobs at a time of 8.6 percent unemployment.

It is time that the President starts to say yes and stops saying no to jobs and to energy—yes to energy security, yes to tens of thousands of new good-paying jobs.

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

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

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I seek recognition in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

PAYROLL TAX CUT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, we are at a time in the calendar that usually is a time of excellent anticipation. Christmas is coming. The holidays are coming. People are trying to