

would help pay for Obama health care. However, eventually we would have to honor the payments due to the people on the program.

Senator CONRAD from North Dakota called the CLASS Act a Ponzi scheme of the first order because what we would be doing under the program is collecting premiums for an insurance product and using the money to help pay for Obama health care. So when people are ready to get the services they have paid for, there would be no money in the program to pay them because it was used to offset Obama health care costs. It is just not a practical idea. The costs would explode over time. There would be adverse selection. So it was an ill-conceived idea.

The House is going to repeal it. The HHS Secretary said they would not implement the program. I hope the Senate will allow repeal so we can take it off the table and it is a reason for the Congress to revisit the Affordable Health Care Act, Obama health care, because one of the components of the legislation relied upon the revenue to be collected by the CLASS Act to offset the cost of Obama health care, trying to make it deficit neutral. That is no longer a viable option. The money to be collected by the CLASS Act is never going to happen. So that money cannot be used to make the legislation deficit neutral.

This is a chance for the Senate, working with the House, to repeal the program. I think it would be wise for us all to sit down and try to reevaluate what does this mean in terms of the viability of the Affordable Health Care Act because the assumptions made by the CLASS Act are never going to come true.

I have been working with Senator THUNE for a very long time to keep this program from coming about. I would like to say this is a bipartisan moment, where we have stopped a program that would have a devastating effect long term on the country's finances and would do very little to improve health care.

I wish to, one, congratulate the HHS Secretary for understanding this program is unsound. I would like to make sure it is repealed, and I think Congress should be the body to do that. But this is good news for the taxpayer. It is good news for the country as a whole that we are not going to allow a program to be created that is unsustainable, that is going to add to the debt and do very little to take care of our health care needs. It was a Ponzi scheme. It is a Ponzi scheme that needs to be buried politically, as soon as possible.

I look forward to taking up the House-passed legislation. I hope we can get bipartisan support in the Senate to make sure what HHS Secretary Sebelius said never happens, that the CLASS Act never becomes reality because it is an unsound, unwise, poorly constructed program, and this is a chance for the Senate to come together

and do something about it with our House colleagues.

With that, 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. LIEBERMAN. 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. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I note the presence on the floor of the distinguished Senator from Delaware, to whom I am pleased to yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I thank Senator LIEBERMAN.

I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of tens of thousands of Delawareans affected by domestic violence each year, as well as their families, their friends, and their allies across our State and our country.

Just a few minutes ago, my colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee took up the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. It has earned strong bipartisan support through the nearly two decades since its original passage, and it was voted out earlier today.

Law enforcement agencies across this country are counting on us to move forward with the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization, depending on the training and the resources to advocate for victims and to provide critical and lifesaving interventions that it funds.

As I asked for input from Delawareans in the last few weeks, one of the hundreds who took the time to write or call my office in strong support of the reauthorization of VAWA was a former New Castle County police officer. He e-mailed me to tell me he had seen firsthand that dedicated resources and innovative policing methods made possible by VAWA made a real difference in combating these types of crimes and improving the lives of victims.

The Violence Against Women Act has been extraordinarily effective, with the annual incidence of domestic violence falling by more than 50 percent since it was first passed. Yet we still have so far to go.

Just this week, I heard from hundreds of constituents in Delaware for whom this legislation has a deep and resounding importance. From young women in their twenties to senior citizens, Delawareans from all walks of life have reached out to ask us, as Members of the Senate, to take action without

delay, to work with our colleagues in the House, and to reauthorize this most important bill.

Paul from Yorklyn, DE, wrote to say that as a father of two young daughters, he worries that if the Violence Against Women Act is not reauthorized, then victims of sexual assault will once again be subject to two traumas—first, horrific attacks and, second, trying to pursue justice against their attackers.

Linda from New Castle, DE, had the courage to write me personally and say:

First of all, I am a victim and I am not ashamed to say that [today].

Linda's willingness to lift the cloud of fear and shame that for so long enveloped victims of domestic and dating violence is brave and important in that she was able and willing to do that, but she also highlights the ongoing challenges we face. She described her hesitation to discuss abuse out loud and stressed the importance of talking about these crimes in the open in order to break what she called the generational curse.

As a son, as a husband, as a father, I too am deeply concerned about this curse that has moved from generation to generation and has affected families all throughout this country's history.

Evils such as domestic violence thrive in darkness. The Violence Against Women Act is a spotlight, and it deserves to be strengthened and sustained by this Senate today and this year.

The Violence Against Women Act requires reauthorization every 5 years. This signifies a belief that protecting victims of domestic and dating violence is so important that we must revisit it to make sure we are getting it right.

Each time we go through the process of reauthorizing this bill, we learn more about what is needed. This time around, that process, I believe, has resulted in several critical enhancements; first, by bolstering the tools available to law enforcement. Along with my friend and colleague Senator BLUNT, I cochair the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus. I am determined to ensure local agencies have the tools they need to support victims and to prosecute abusers. This reauthorization will do just that.

Second, our review made clear that perpetrators find their victims throughout our society without regard for sexual orientation or gender identity. So the reauthorization that was passed out of the Judiciary Committee just earlier today addresses that challenge by making this the very first Federal grant program to explicitly state that grant recipients cannot discriminate on the basis of a victim's status. Whether they are or are not a member of the LGBT community should be irrelevant to whether they are able to access the vital services funded by the VAWA.

Finally, this reauthorization recognizes our current difficult fiscal situation as a country and promotes accountability to make sure these dollars are well spent. It reduces authorization levels while protecting the programs which have been most successful. This VAWA reauthorization merges 13 existing programs into 4 streamlined and consolidated programs. This will prevent wasted time and effort and make the application and administrative processes more efficient.

I am honored to be joined today by an old and dear friend, a former countywide-elected official, Paulette Moore, now vice president of public policy for the National Network to End Domestic Violence. I am grateful to my dear friend Carol Post, who leads the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and my friend Amy Barasch, a tireless advocate in the ongoing efforts to bring to light the challenges of domestic violence in the State of New York.

There are folks all across this country who turn to this task week in and week out. It is long and tiring and difficult work, but it is uplifting because it is part of making this a more just, more safe, and more secure nation.

It is important for me to note that, unfortunately, some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle see the enhancements I just referred to in this reauthorization as a reason to abandon their long-term support for it, even though they have been strong backers of VAWA in the past. In fact, the vote we just took in the Judiciary Committee was 10 to 8. It only narrowly passed. I hope our friends on the other side of the aisle will review the details of these changes one more time and see their way clear to join us in this effort to strengthen and sustain the Violence Against Women Act. It is and should remain a bipartisan bill and a bipartisan effort.

My predecessor in this seat, our great Vice President, JOE BIDEN of Delaware, took an absolutely central leadership role in writing and passing the first Violence Against Women Act in one of the most enduring legacies of his 36-year Senate career, representing Delaware and advocating for women all over this country.

His efforts broke barriers and laid the groundwork for this current bill. But it is up to all of us to keep pushing tirelessly for Federal, State, and local governments to do more to save lives and to serve victims.

I urge my colleagues to come together and promptly pass the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Thank you to the men and women of this country who work so hard to end this terrible scourge of domestic violence in our country.

I yield the floor, and I 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 2038

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments listed below be the only amendments remaining in order to the bill before the Senate, S. 2038:

Lieberman No. 1482; Paul No. 1484; Paul No. 1487; Lieberman side-by-side to Shelby amendment No. 1491; Shelby No. 1491, as modified; Lieberman side-by-side to Paul No. 1485; Paul No. 1485, as modified; Collins side-by-side to Boxer No. 1489; Boxer-Isakson No. 1489; Portman No. 1505; Enzi No. 1510; Blumenthal No. 1498; Toomey-McCaskill No. 1472; Inhofe No. 1500; McCain No. 1471; Leahy-Cornyn No. 1483; Coburn No. 1473; DeMint No. 1488; Grassley No. 1493; Brown of Ohio No. 1481, as modified; that all other pending amendments be withdrawn, with the exception of the substitute amendment; that the time until 2 p.m. be for debate on the bill and amendments, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that at 2 p.m., the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the amendments in the order listed; that there be no amendments or points of order to any of the amendments prior to the votes other than budget points of order; that the following be subject to a 60-vote affirmative threshold: Paul No. 1487; Collins side-by-side to Boxer No. 1489; Boxer No. 1489, as modified; Blumenthal No. 1498; Toomey-McCaskill No. 1472; Inhofe No. 1500; McCain No. 1471; Leahy No. 1483; DeMint No. 1488; Grassley No. 1493; and Brown No. 1481; further, that Coburn amendment No. 1473 be subject to a two-thirds affirmative vote threshold; that there be two minutes equally divided in between the votes; that all after the first vote be 10 minutes in duration; that upon disposition of the amendments listed, the substitute amendment, as amended, if amended, be agreed to, and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment No. 1491, as modified, is as follows:

At the end of the amendment, insert the following:

SEC. 10. PROMPT REPORTING AND PUBLIC FILING OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS FOR EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

(a) TRANSACTION REPORTING.—Each agency or department of the Executive branch and each independent agency shall comply with the provisions of sections 6 with respect to any of such agency, department or independent agency's officers and employees that are subject to the disclosure provisions under the Ethics in Government Act of 1978.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this

Act, each agency or department of the Executive branch and each independent agency shall comply with the provisions of section 8, except that the provisions of section 8 shall not apply to a member of a uniformed service for which the pay grade prescribed by section 201 of title 37, United States Code is O-6 or below.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the mere fact that we now have the right to vote doesn't mean people have to have recorded votes. There are other ways of rejecting or approving amendments. I hope people will talk to Senators LIEBERMAN and COLLINS and find out if there needs to be a recorded vote on these matters. I appreciate the cooperation of both sides.

STOP TRADING ON CONGRESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE ACT OF 2012

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2038, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2038) to prohibit Members of Congress and employees of Congress from using nonpublic information derived from their official positions for personal benefit, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 1470, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid (for Lieberman) amendment No. 1482 (to Amendment No. 1470), to make a technical amendment to a reporting requirement.

Brown (OH) amendment No. 1478 (to amendment No. 1470), to change the reporting requirement to 10 days.

Brown (OH)/Merkley modified amendment No. 1481 (to amendment No. 1470), to prohibit financial conflicts of interest by Senators and staff.

Toomey amendment No. 1472 (to amendment No. 1470), to prohibit earmarks.

Thune amendment No. 1477 (to amendment No. 1470), to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to eliminate the prohibition against general solicitation as a requirement for a certain exemption under Regulation D.

McCain amendment No. 1471 (to amendment No. 1470), to protect the American taxpayer by prohibiting bonuses for Senior Executives at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac while they are in conservatorship.

Leahy/Cornyn amendment No. 1483 (to amendment No. 1470), to deter public corruption.

Coburn amendment No. 1473 (to amendment No. 1470), to prevent the creation of duplicative and overlapping Federal programs.

Coburn/McCain amendment No. 1474 (to amendment No. 1470), to require that all legislation be placed online for 72 hours before it is voted on by the Senate or the House.

Coburn amendment No. 1476, in the nature of a substitute.

Paul amendment No. 1484 (to amendment No. 1470), to require Members of Congress to certify that they are not trading using material, non-public information.

Paul amendment No. 1485 (to amendment No. 1470), to apply the reporting requirements to Federal employees and judicial officers.

Paul amendment No. 1487 (to amendment No. 1470), to prohibit executive branch appointees or staff holding positions that give them oversight, rule-making, loan or grant-making abilities over industries or companies in which they or their spouse have a significant financial interest.