

looking for work day after day and week after week. I would have preferred a longer-term agreement rather than just the 5 months that are proposed in the agreement. It is very important that we have finally reached a point where we can pass a measure that will provide protection and support for folks as they look for work.

Thursday we had a procedural vote which was bipartisan to move the bill forward. Thankfully, this week the Senate will be voting on the bill itself. We hope the House will follow suit and provide this kind of much-needed boost for those who are out of work.

The numbers are staggering. For example, when we look at the numbers in Pennsylvania, almost 75,000 people immediately stopped receiving unemployment benefits when the emergency unemployment compensation expired on December 28. I can't even imagine what that was like for an individual or for an individual and his or her family—3 days after Christmas, right in the middle of the holiday season. It is supposed to be a time of joy. It is a time when families are spending lots of time together in ways they cannot often do during the year. To have their unemployment run out on December 28 had to be horrific for those individuals.

Between December 28 and March 15—in addition to the 75,000 I mentioned for Pennsylvania—over 110,000 Pennsylvanians lost their benefits. Through May—the bill would go to June 1 and be retroactive to December 28—it is estimated that 158,400 Pennsylvanians and almost 2.8 million Americans will have lost their emergency unemployment compensation. They are the folks who have been hurting and will be hurting unless we take action, and they are the ones, of course, who will benefit if we take action.

Unemployment insurance doesn't just provide an economic relief to that individual and his or her family. It is also an economic jump-starter. For example, in 2012, Mark Zandi, a respected economist—I will say for the record he has roots in Pennsylvania, but he is respected across the board—said that for every dollar of emergency unemployment compensation, there is \$1.52 in new economic activity. It is that old “spend a buck,” and what do you get for a buck? In the case of emergency unemployment insurance, you spend a buck and you get a buck fifty-two in return. I don't care what market you are in. That is a pretty good return—especially when it is helping people so substantially. This is about providing that lifeline for those families at a time when they really need it, and it is also about the economic benefits for the rest of us. A lot of people have heard these numbers as well—analyses that specifically focus on the extension of benefits in 2014. They have also indicated—by using other data—the impact it has on the economy.

I will give an example. The Economic Policy Institute has estimated that extending unemployment benefits in 2014

would generate \$37.8 billion in economic activity. That is the impact for this year as found by the Economic Policy Institute—\$37.8 billion.

This is about all of us. This is not about a group of people over here we hope to help. That is a wonderful sentiment. This is about whether they are going to have an opportunity—just a fair shot—to have a chance to get back into the economy and back into work. It is also about the rest of us in another way as well. It is about whether we are going to make sure everyone has an opportunity for that fair shot. Of course, it is also about the rest of us because we benefit when this program continues because of the economic boost and the \$1.52 for the buck you spend on it, as well as the \$37.8 billion of activity.

We have heard about the numbers and the rationale for continuing this program, both of which I would argue are not just compelling but urgent. But what about the real people. There are two people in my hometown—one I had spoken to in the past and the second person was someone I had never met before. I just want to give an example of these two individuals and their lives in Scranton, PA, where I live—Lackawanna County—which has a very high unemployment rate.

The first person is Joe Walsh. Joe has lived in my hometown all of his life. He was a tradesman for 40 years, so he had a very specific skill that allowed him to work and support his family. He worked as a superintendent for 14 years, and in 2008 the company he worked for needed to downsize, and he lost his position and immediately went on unemployment insurance. He worked on and off over the years for contractors who needed temporary workers, but he was unable to find anything steady, which is a story we have heard too often.

On December 28 of 2013—the day I mentioned before—Joe exceeded his unemployment insurance benefits and has not received any support since then, but he continues to look for work and file his claims. Joe is married and has three grown children. He says he feels “lucky” because his wife works and is able to keep their household afloat during a very difficult time.

Joe is 63 years old, and for all of those years and all of those decades he has had a skill and work ethic that allowed him to work. He said that if he had a mortgage now, he would not be able to survive. He finds it difficult to find the kind of work he had before—tradesman work, which requires a skill.

The second person we had a press conference with is someone I met in our neighborhood—we go to the same church—Vera Radice. Vera has spoken to me before about her circumstances. Over the years she was with several banking institutions. She was employed steadily from February of 1995 until July of 2014. She was doing good work for all of those years for two different banking institutions.

She has a Bachelor of Science degree from Cookstown University and an associate's degree from Luzerne County Community College. She has the education you often need to find the job you want, and she has almost 20 years of experience. Now she is left with volunteering and looking for work. She has attended all of the CareerLink workshops in Lackawanna County. She spends at least 3 days a week at CareerLink searching for work over and over.

These are the people—and not just tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands, but literally millions of others across the country—who are in the same situation as they are. It is time we did the job we were elected to do and put this emergency unemployment compensation program back into place and give people a fair shot—nothing else. They are just asking for a fair shot to find work so they can support their families, be a part of the economy, a part of this country, and the world of work they were so much a part of for most of their lives.

I would like to see all of us come together in a bipartisan fashion and get this passed and get it to the House. I hope our House colleagues are listening not just to my voice but, more importantly, I hope they are listening to the voices of people who they represent—the Veras and Joes of the world.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam 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—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that today at 2:15 p.m. the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 532 and 683; that there be 15 minutes for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate proceed to vote with no intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed, with 2 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form between the votes; that all after the first vote be 10 minutes in length; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we also hope to reach agreement on another

nomination, and hopefully we can do that during the break we are going to have now.

I have nothing further.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:46 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of Executive Calendar No. 532, the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 687, without intervening action or debate on the nomination, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KEVIN WHITAKER TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER P. LU TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF LABOR

NOMINATION OF JOHN P. CARLIN TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Kevin Whitaker, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia; Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor; John P. Carlin, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 15 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to a vote on the Whitaker nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in legislative session.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. REED. Madam President, yesterday my colleagues agreed by a voice

vote to proceed to a debate on the bipartisan agreement to restore emergency unemployment insurance to 2.7 million Americans. This is great progress from where we have been the last few months, as I have made the case to renew these benefits.

I wish to thank my colleagues for their support and urge them to continue to move this compromise to passage, as it represents our best path forward to quickly provide aid to our constituents and supporting our economic recovery. I hope the voice vote yesterday is indicative of broad support going forward, and that this agreement will not be bogged down by unnecessary roadblocks.

Millions of Americans who have worked hard, who were laid off through no fault of their own, and are searching for work are looking to us to get this commonsense extension done and done promptly. I would again like to thank my colleagues who have joined in this effort. They recognize this is the right thing to do for our workers and it is the right thing to do for our economy.

I would also like to particularly thank my Republican cosponsors who have brought constructive thoughts and ideas to the table, helping bring us here to this point. Senator HELLER has been a stalwart in extending these emergency benefits. Senator COLLINS, Senator PORTMAN, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator KIRK have all contributed valuable thoughts, along with Senator COATS and Senator AYOTTE. This has been an effort that has truly been bipartisan. I think it represents a coming together of proposals from both sides, but ultimately to serve the best interests of our constituents who again are looking for work in a very difficult market.

We have been working together since literally last year before these benefits expired on December 28. We know how important it is to provide this assistance to families throughout this Nation. We also understand that we have to go ahead and not only provide support for the families but also to support the local economy. This will do it. It will provide resources that will immediately go back into the economy and stimulate demand and stimulate growth.

I want to also thank my colleagues for the way they have thoughtfully approached some of the issues. Senator COLLINS has helped build upon this important reform to provide a mechanism which we hope will get people back to work sooner. We have incorporated another assessment in the process. It is fully paid for. People will get, in the course of their extended benefits, the opportunity and also the obligation to come back in, be assessed, be given advice, be given some coaching. We think, and some data suggest, this is one of the most effective ways to get people back into a job in a difficult market.

Senator PORTMAN is a former Director of the Office of Management and

Budget, and one of the real experts, who has been key to identifying appropriate pay-fors which are critical.

Senator MURKOWSKI and Senator KIRK worked to include an examination of the work suitability and work search standards across the States so we can be better informed and better prepared when we have to deal with further reforms to our unemployment compensation system.

This agreement incorporates many good ideas of my colleagues. It is important we build upon the historic reforms Congress undertook in 2012. I will try to discuss those reforms in more detail later in the week. But as I said again, most importantly, it will help people who have worked, who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own, who are desperately searching for work and must search for work in a difficult economy. It will help our economy overall.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Kevin Whitaker, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 94 Ex.]

YEAS—99

Alexander	Cardin	Durbin
Ayotte	Carper	Feinstein
Baldwin	Casey	Fischer
Barrasso	Chambliss	Flake
Begich	Coats	Franken
Bennet	Coburn	Gillibrand
Blumenthal	Cochran	Graham
Blunt	Collins	Grassley
Booker	Coons	Hagan
Boozman	Corker	Harkin
Boxer	Cornyn	Hatch
Brown	Crapo	Heinrich
Burr	Cruz	Heitkamp
Cantwell	Donnelly	Heller