

speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, my wife and I are blessed with a son and daughter who are good people, hard workers with good values. We basically believe the following: If they did the same job, they deserve the same pay—my daughter and my son. Most Americans agree with that. People should be judged on what they do, their performance, their productivity, not on their gender. That is at the heart of the issue pending before the Senate at this moment.

Tomorrow we will take a vote. It is a procedural vote, so it takes 60 Senators to vote to move forward on what is known as the Paycheck Fairness Act. We have 55 Democrats. The simple math tells you that unless five Republican Senators join us to move forward on this issue, that is the end of the story. It would be unfortunate if it is the end of the story.

The Paycheck Fairness Act amends the Equal Pay Act to discourage discrimination based on gender and to help narrow the pay gap in America. No. 1, the bill provides women the same remedies for sex-based pay discrimination that are available to people today based on racial or national origin discrimination. No. 2, the bill prohibits retaliation against workers who disclose their wages. Think about that for a second.

Lilly Ledbetter worked in a tire factory in Alabama for years. Toward the end of her work life, she received an anonymous note that said: Lilly, you have been underpaid. You have been making less than the men do in the same job in this plant since you have been here. She was crushed. She thought she was a valued employee. No one ever questioned the quality of her work, and she was being paid less than the men doing the same job at her factory.

She filed a lawsuit, and it made it all the way to the Supreme Court—across the street. Not surprisingly, this conservative, business-oriented, Republican-oriented Supreme Court said: Sorry, Ms. Ledbetter. You should have reported that pay discrimination when it first started. Well, why didn't she? She didn't know. How could she know? Payroll information is not published—except perhaps for government employees. That payroll information was not available to her to file the lawsuit when it first occurred. When she found out about it, she filed the lawsuit across the street, and the learned Supreme Court said: Too late.

So we changed the law. The very first law signed by the President of the United States Barack Obama was the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which said that Lilly Ledbetter and women just like her across America, deserve

an opportunity for equal pay for equal work. What we have before us today—this Paycheck Fairness Act—is an effort to make sure that law is strong and helps women across America.

No. 1, it says that women cannot be discriminated against in the workplace simply because they are women. No. 2, you can't threaten retaliation if one worker tells another what the pay is at that particular place of work. No. 3, it adds programs for training, research, technical assistance, and awards to recognize pay equity employers.

The Equal Pay Act was signed into law almost 50 years ago, but the pay gap between men and women in America is just about the same today as it was then. According to the U.S. Census Bureau—as we heard over and over—women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. African-American women make 70 cents on the dollar, and Hispanic women make about 60 cents on the dollar.

In my State of Illinois, 37 percent of married employed mothers are their family's primary wage earners. Yet they face the same income disparity. It turns out to be a yearly gap of \$11,596 on average between men and women who work full time in my State. That is what the disparity in pay between men and women means in the State of Illinois. It is not just less take-home pay for women doing the same job, it means fewer Social Security benefits when they retire. They are not earning at the same level as men. They pay for this discrimination for a lifetime.

The National Partnership for Women and Families found that ending this wage gap would provide women in my State with additional earnings that would be the equivalent of 97 weeks of food, 13 months of rent, 7 months of mortgage payments or 3,000 gallons of gas. It is a big deal for a struggling family—particularly for a woman who is a struggling wage earner in Illinois.

Regardless of occupation, education, industry or marital status, pay for women in my State lags behind their male counterparts. Women in Illinois who work in business and financial management earn 72 percent of their male counterpart's salary. That is what is before the Senate.

Is it wrong? Yes, it is. Are we prepared to say so in legislation? Tune in tomorrow and find out whether five Republicans will join us to raise this issue of pay fairness for women across America.

I am not encouraged by the statement that was just made on the floor by the Senate Republican leader. He referred to this whole conversation about paycheck fairness and minimum wage increases—so that people who go to work every single day do not live in poverty—as “the left's latest bizarre obsession.” He said that we were blowing a few kisses to our powerful pals on the left with this legislative agenda. He called it tone deaf, blame deflection, and shadow boxing on the Senate floor.

The Senate Republican leader said the divide between the two parties is in

stark relief. He is right. He went on to say: We should drop any pretense of doing anything serious in this Chamber if this is what we are going to discuss.

How serious is equal pay for equal work to working people across America? I think it is critical. It is one thing for the Senate Republican leader to talk about job creation. We all want it. We are desperate for it. We are moving toward it in many different ways, but let's talk to those who are working and have jobs and whether they are paid fairly. Is that important to them? Of course.

Simply having a job may be important, but when you get to the heart of it, people want to be rewarded for good work. They don't want to work 40 hours a week, get up every morning, get on the bus in the dark, put their kids in their neighbor's house for daycare, head to their job, and at the end of the week realize they are still living in poverty. And that is what today's minimum wage does.

The women on those buses and the CTA trains that we see every morning in Chicago, with their shopping bags full of the basics so they can go to work and leaving their kids behind, want to believe they will be paid fairly for what they do. That is not much to ask.

According to the Republican leader, it shows the stark contrast between the two parties. It is a stark contrast. The Republican leader says that we want to work for a commitment to jobs and focus on the power of ideas. I want to focus on the power of an idea too. It is the idea of fairness and fair play. It is as basic as being an American, to believe that people ought to be treated fairly, and that when they do the same work they are entitled to the same pay. That is not too much to ask. In fact, we should demand it.

I suppose we are going to have a critical, historic vote tomorrow. I am hoping five—just five—Republicans will step up on behalf of working women across America and join us on this Paycheck Fairness Act. Without them, this idea will die for now, but it is not going to die forever. The American people have the last word. They will have it in the election. They can decide if this is important. They can decide whether—as the Republican leader said—this is just a bizarre obsession on the part of the left to think of fair pay for the same work. I think it is pretty basic to America.

This is our chance. Paycheck fairness and a minimum wage to keep people who get up and go to work every day out of poverty are fundamental to a good workplace and a workforce across America which is respected by the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

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

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

FORT HOOD SHOOTING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last week the men and women at the Fort Hood Army post in Killeen, TX, witnessed a shocking act of violence as a gunman suddenly and inexplicably opened fire, killing 3 fellow soldiers and wounding 16 others. Yet, even as our attention has focused on the horror of this event, I think it is also important to talk about the very best of humanity demonstrated during this time of tragedy and crisis.

The men and women at Fort Hood saw the very best of humanity in the military police officer who confronted the shooter, for example.

They saw it in Private Jacob Sanders, who risked his own life in the hopes of saving one of the victims.

They saw it in SGT Jonathan Westbrook, who was shot and wounded by the gunman but still managed to radio Fort Hood officials and sound the alert so that others might be protected and safe.

They also saw it in SFC Danny Ferguson, who served a combat tour in Iraq and had recently gotten home from a second one in Afghanistan. Last Wednesday Sergeant Ferguson used his own body to prevent the shooter from entering a crowded room. He gave his life so that his fellow soldiers could keep theirs. He showed the kind of heroism that few of us could even imagine, the kind of heroism that defines our men and women in uniform.

So even as we mourn the terrible loss of Sergeant Ferguson, we want to also take a moment to celebrate his wonderful example and his wonderful life, just as we celebrate the remarkable lives of SGT Timothy Owens and SSG Carlos Lazaney-Rodriguez.

Sergeant Owens served his country in Iraq and in Kuwait. He also served as a counselor at Fort Hood. According to his mother, he counseled literally "hundreds of people." His brother Darrell described him as someone who "would help anybody who needed help."

Sergeant Lazaney-Rodriguez was a native of Puerto Rico, and he served multiple combat tours in Iraq. He too made a distinct impression on his friends and fellow soldiers at Fort Hood. One of them described him as "the epitome of what you want a leader to be in the Army."

As I mentioned a moment ago, as we mourn the loss of Sergeant Ferguson, Sergeant Owens, and Sergeant Lazaney-Rodriguez, we should take a moment to celebrate their lives and their service. All three of these men chose—they volunteered—to devote their lives to a noble cause—the defense of our country—and our memories of their work and their sacrifice will live forever.

Before I conclude, I wish to say one more word about Fort Hood, where I will be traveling to tomorrow with the President. Fort Hood is also known as The Great Place. They call it The Great Place. I had the honor of visiting the post last Thursday, and I will do so again tomorrow for the memorial, as I said. As we all remember, Fort Hood was also the scene of an earlier mass shooting in November of 2009. That was yet another day where we saw both the worst and the best of humanity. We saw the very best of humanity in people such as Michael Cahill, a civilian physician's assistant and retired soldier, and Army CPT John Gaffaney, both of whom charged the gunman—MAJ Nidal Hasan—and gave their lives in order to save the lives of others around them.

Over the last 13 years, the Fort Hood community has made enormous contributions to America's missions in Iraq and in Afghanistan, where more than 550 of their soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice. In fact, the last combat brigade to leave Iraq was a Fort Hood brigade—the Third Brigade of the storied 1st Cavalry Division.

I sometimes think about the fact that most Americans probably don't have a close friend or relative who has served in the Armed Forces. So in some ways the American people have become isolated to some degree from the realities of war and national security. For them the war in Afghanistan is something they read about in the newspaper or they hear about on TV, but it is not very real to them unless they have a family member or a loved one or a friend who has served.

For the families at Fort Hood and in the surrounding Texas communities of Belton, Copperas Cove, Harker Heights, Killeen, and Temple, it is something much different, something much more personal because it is a family member, it is a loved one, it is a friend who has served, and many of them have lost their lives in the process because they believed that keeping the American people safe was more important than their own personal security and safety.

I wish to take this moment to let the families and friends of the victims at Fort Hood know that—and, indeed, to tell all the good people at Fort Hood—your fellow Americans are thinking about you, we are praying for you and keeping you close in our hearts during this difficult time.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UCONN VICTORY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to begin by remarking on the ex-

traordinary and remarkable triumph of the UConn men's basketball team last night—a victory that is beyond my words to describe—and the achievement it represents for those players, for the school, for coach Kevin Ollie, and for the entire university, particularly in the face of last year's disqualification—unfair and unjustified, in my view.

I am so proud of our team and the University of Connecticut for its steadfast and relentless pursuit of this national championship, which last night culminated in a huge and joyous triumph felt throughout Connecticut and, in fact, throughout the country.

I will be commenting in greater length and depth on how this achievement reflects on the University of Connecticut, what it means to college athletics, and what lessons we can take from this great triumph.

In the meantime, I am wearing my University of Connecticut tie with the emblem of the Huskies because last night's triumph is only a prelude to tonight.

UConn is rolling with momentum toward two national championships. The women, I believe, will prevail tonight, and I expect to collect on another debt—the debt owed to me already by my colleagues from Kentucky I think will be supplemented tomorrow—and I will ask that my Kentucky colleague, Senator PAUL, wear this tie, if only for a brief moment, to demonstrate who was the better team last night. They are both great teams, but Connecticut was the greatest.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here this morning on a very serious and important subject—the Paycheck Fairness Act. I thank my colleagues who were with me earlier today at an event we attended. The President is doing an event right now. He has announced he will require all Federal contractors to follow the rule that there should be no retaliation against people in the workplace who share information about their pay. It sounds like a basic principle of fairness but, unfortunately, the law has gaps that permit discrimination—gender discrimination, unequal pay for the same work. So today on Equal Pay Day, I am here to advocate for the Paycheck Fairness Act, which will help fill some of those gaps.

This issue is not a man's issue, it is not a woman's issue. It is a family issue. It is not about women, it is about paycheck fairness. So it is as much about men as it is about women. Right now 40 percent of all our families are supported by women either as the sole or primary breadwinner. That means the children in those families, and the men, depend on that income and on the fairness of their paychecks to keep a roof over their head and to keep food on the table.

Paycheck fairness is about a fair shot—a fair shot for every woman and