

we believe it is fair that fellow Americans who work full time be paid less than a livable wage? I hope not. Or do we value all American workers and reward them with, at the very least, a baseline wage that enables them to provide for their families?

There was a recent story in Nevada about a young man named Dalven who works at McDonald's. He works hard, but his wages are so low he is forced to get another job. Working two jobs, what is this young man going to do? Is he going to go to college? Of course not. Is he going to go to trade school? Of course not. He is too busy working. What is going to happen to him to better his life?

Just a few months ago an incredibly successful businessman visited Capitol Hill. He said he put himself through college attending Harvard, and he did that being paid \$2 an hour, which was the minimum wage at the time. He now is an elderly, very successful businessman. He worked full-time over the course of the year and was able to pay Harvard's tuition. The tuition at that time was \$2,400 a year—which was a lot—at one of America's premier schools. Jim even claims he had money left over after paying his college fees. Jim's daughter is now preparing to enroll at Harvard. If she were to be employed at today's minimum wage, she would need to work full time for 4 years to afford even one year of tuition and room and board at Harvard. The young man at McDonald's I just talked about, Dalven, could never dream of putting himself through Harvard or UNLV or any other place because he is working two jobs and cannot do it.

Simply put, it is not fair that working families are being stripped of the American dream. That is what Dalven has, as does everybody else, and as did the Presiding Officer and as did I—the dream to better oneself, to maybe even be better than what their family was able to be.

So, again, put simply, is it fair that working men and women are being stripped of the American dream because we refuse to pay them a livable wage? They are working hard. That is why this legislation before us is so critical.

An increase in the minimum wage obviously won't make a millionaire of anyone, but it will ensure that each full time working American receives a wage they can live on and that will give them a fighting chance to get ahead in the economy. Every hard-working American should have the opportunity to put a roof over their head and that of their family, and every full-time employee should have a fair shot at the American dream.

So I invite my Republican colleagues to consider what is fair for their constituents and to work with us to increase the Federal minimum wage, as 75 percent of the American people think we should do. They should join in giving every American a fair shot to provide for their families.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Republican leader is recognized.

#### CONDOLENCES TO TORNADO VICTIMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to offer condolences to those affected by this week's storms. Tornadoes struck a terrible blow in several towns, and we are thinking today of all of those who were killed and injured and their friends and families as well.

#### JOBS

Mr. President, the American people want Congress to focus on one thing above all else: Jobs. Jobs. One would think the Democrats who control the Senate would want to help us advance bipartisan ideas to boost job creation. One would think they would actually work with us to address the concerns and anxieties of our constituents. But, instead, Senate Democrats are pushing legislation this week that would actually cost—not create but actually cost—up to a million American jobs.

This is completely tone deaf. Their bill would cost up to 17,000 jobs in Kentucky alone. Apparently, this is what Senate Democrats have made their top priority. It is not much of a surprise, though. As I have said many times, Washington Democrats often seem to hurt the very people they claim to be fighting for. When it comes to so many of their proposals, Washington Democrats appear to prioritize the desires of the far left over the needs of the middle class. Let's be honest. The interests of the far left and the interests of the middle class seem to be in fierce opposition these days.

Take the Keystone Pipeline, for example. The Obama administration recently announced yet another punt on this critical jobs project—one that would lead to the creation of thousands—literally thousands—of good jobs. Why? Because of pressure from the far left. One union leader called the administration's decision “a cold, hard slap in the face for hard-working Americans.” Another labor leader, whose union endorsed the President twice, put it this way: “No one seriously believes that the administration's nearly-dark-of-night announcement . . . was anything but politically motivated. It represented,” he said, “another low blow to the working men and women of our country for whom the Keystone XL Pipeline is a lifeline to good jobs and to energy security. . . .”

Here is a project the government has been studying for 5 or 6 years now. For 5 or 6 years they have been studying this project.

Americans have learned that building Keystone would produce significant economic benefit for our country, that it would lower energy prices, and that it would lead to the creation of thousands of jobs at a time when we need them more than ever. President Obama's own administration has concluded that approving Keystone would not significantly impact net carbon

emissions anyway. Approving the project wouldn't have an adverse impact on carbon emissions.

So one would think Washington Democrats would join the large majority of Americans who say Keystone is a good deal for our country. One would think they would jump at the chance to advance sound policy that has already been thoroughly vetted. But, then, we would be missing the point because Democrats' opposition to Keystone isn't really about policy at all. They basically surrendered the policy argument a long time ago. That is not really what this is about for them. Remember: This is the same party that effectively conceded its agenda for the rest of this year was drafted by campaign staffers. The whole agenda for the rest of the year was drafted by campaign staffers. They said that.

So for them this is more about politics and symbolism, and the far left has apparently decided that killing Keystone is the symbolic scalp they want. In fact, they are demanding it. Washington Democrats seem perfectly willing to go along.

Of course, the big loser in all of this is the American middle class—the moms and dads and sisters and brothers whose primary concern is paying the bills and putting food on the table. These are the people who have had it worse in the Obama economy—the very people Washington Democrats should be doing literally everything to help.

What I am saying to my colleagues today is it is not too late. They can still work with Republicans to create more opportunity and to help us rebuild the middle class, but to do so they need to abandon the left and start focusing on the middle class for a change. If they are ready to get serious about job creation, then there are some easy ways to demonstrate that to the American people. For starters, they can stop pushing legislation that would cut rather than create jobs, and they can stop blocking projects such as Keystone—a project that almost everyone knows will create jobs. Americans want jobs, not symbolism. So start working with us to give the American people the kind of pro-jobs policies they want and deserve.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### LANDMINE SCOURGE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have spoken several times in the past few weeks—and I have spoken many times in the past 20 years—about the scourge of landmines.

They are inherently indiscriminate weapons. They are triggered by the victim, and usually the victim is an innocent civilian who is either killed or horribly maimed.

The United States has not exported, produced, or used antipersonnel mines for more than 20 years. But notwithstanding that—even though 161 nations have joined the international treaty banning them—one nation stands out for not having joined the treaty. That is the United States, and it is a shame on this country.

As the world's only superpower with by far the most powerful military, one would have thought the United States would set an example of moral leadership. Instead, we are among those who are preventing the universality of the treaty.

This is doubly disappointing, considering that it was President Clinton who, 20 years ago, called for the elimination of antipersonnel mines. Two years later, in 1996—back in the last century—he said: “Today I am launching an international effort to ban antipersonnel landmines.” But his administration did not sign the treaty.

Then we had the Bush administration. They did nothing on the issue.

Now we have the Obama administration. Nothing has changed. The Obama administration is following the Bush administration's policy of doing nothing. So we are still waiting.

Last week I was in Vietnam, along with Senators SHELBY and CRAPO and Representatives COOPER from Tennessee and WELCH from Vermont. We had conversations with President Sang, with the Minister of Defense, and other Vietnamese officials. But we also met with nongovernmental organizations—many of them Americans—that work to locate and clear landmines and other unexploded ordnance.

It is costly, dangerous work. They have been doing it for decades. At the current rate, when you consider that millions of landmines and bombs were dropped in Vietnam during the war, it is estimated that it will take another 100 years before it is safe to walk in that country without fear of triggering a deadly explosion.

I have met countless people in Vietnam who have been crippled and disfigured by landmines. Many of them are children the age of my grandchildren. Here is a photograph of two Vietnamese men I met last week. You can see what landmines do. My wife Marcelle and I were deeply touched

when we spoke with them. After all the pain and hardship they have suffered, they were thanking us for helping to get them wheelchairs.

Their lives have been changed terribly forever, yet they are lucky because they survived. They lost their legs, their arms, but thankfully they are not among the tens of thousands who died from landmines during that war and in the decades since the war ended.

In Vietnam, we have used the Leahy War Victims Fund to provide medical care and rehabilitation to thousands of mine victims.

As a Democrat, I want to compliment a Republican President, George H.W. Bush, who worked with me and with the inspired founder of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, Bobby Muller, to start using the Leahy War Victims Fund in Vietnam.

We have spent many millions of dollars to help get rid of the mines. As I said earlier, 40 years after the war, there are still vast areas of Vietnam littered with unexploded mines and bombs.

Yet Vietnam is only one of dozens of countries whose people have been terrorized by landmines—some from our country, some from others.

When you talk to the Department of Defense about this, they say their mines are “smart” because they are designed to deactivate after a finite period of time. Of course, that is better than mines that remain active for years. But if a child steps on one before the time they are deactivated, that child does not know whether this is a smart mine or a dumb mine because as long as they are active, they are no better at distinguishing between a child and a soldier.

I remember the young woman I met in a hospital after the Bosnia war. She was sent away by her parents to be safe during that conflict. But when the war ended she was running down the road to greet her parents and had both legs blown off. The war was over, but it never ended for her.

I have never argued that mines have no military utility. Every weapon does. So does poison gas, so do IEDs. But we would not use them, and we consider it immoral for other people to use them. They are the antithesis of a precision weapon. They do not belong in the arsenal of civilized countries, least of all in the United States. The United States ought to have courage enough to sign the landmine treaty.

You have to wonder, if Pennsylvania or Oklahoma or Utah or Georgia or Vermont or New Jersey or any of our 50 States were littered with landmines, killing and maiming innocent Americans, would we tolerate it? Of course not. We would not make excuses about needing to use these weapons. The outcry would be deafening and the United States would join the treaty, as we should have 15 years ago.

Some might ask why this matters. The United States has not used mines

for two decades, even while we fought two long land wars. That is because the political price of using them—particularly in Afghanistan where more innocent civilians have been killed or injured from landmines than perhaps anywhere else—would have been prohibitive.

It matters because, like any other issue, even when the United States is not part of the problem, we have to be part of the solution. We ought to set an example on this. We ought to be strong enough to do what 161 other countries have done and join the treaty.

I have spoken to President Obama about this. I know he shares my concern about the toll of innocent lives from landmines. As a Senator, he co-sponsored my legislation. So did Secretary Hagel.

This is an unfinished job. It began with President Clinton. It is time to put the United States on a path to join the treaty. Only the Commander in Chief can do that. The world cries out to him to show that kind of moral leadership.

#### EGYPT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, events in Egypt continue to concern people of good will in this country and across the globe, who have shared the Egyptian people's yearning for greater freedom under the rule of law.

I am the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee that funds the State Department and foreign operations.

But even if I were not chairman of that subcommittee, I would have been watching the situation in Egypt with great interest and growing dismay, where hundreds of people are sentenced to death after a sham trial lasting barely an hour. It is appalling to see this flouting of human rights and abuse of the justice system, which are fundamental to any democracy. Nobody—nobody—can justify this. It does not show a commitment to democracy. It shows a dictatorship run amok. It is an egregious violation of human rights.

So I am not prepared to sign off on the delivery of additional aid for the Egyptian military. I am not prepared to do that until we see convincing evidence the government is committed to the rule of law.

We cannot stand here and say: We are troubled by hundreds of people being sentenced to death after a few minutes in a mass trial, but since we have been friends for so long we will go ahead and send you hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. No.

I do not think the taxpayers of this country would condone that, and neither do I.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.