

face in this economy, Democrats plan to exploit those folks for political gain. It is pretty amazing when you think about it.

We are now in the sixth year—the sixth year—of the Obama administration. We all know the stock market has been doing great, so the richest among us are doing fine. But what about the poor? What about working-class folks? What about folks who work in industries liberals don't approve of, such as coal? How many of these Americans have been doing well during the Obama economy?

Record numbers of them are having a perfectly terrible time. One indicator is the growth of the Food Stamp Program. Consider this: Since the President took office, the number of Americans who have signed up for food stamps has literally skyrocketed—skyrocketed. It is up almost half. Nearly 4 out of 10 unemployed Americans are trapped—literally trapped—in long-term unemployment. What is worse, the poorest Americans are the ones who have often had the hardest time recovering in this economy.

Yes, the President took office in the midst of an economic crisis. No one disputes that. But for many Americans, a terrible situation seems to have only gotten worse over the course of this administration. For the President to turn around and try to blame his political opponents for the suffering we have seen out there takes a pretty good amount of nerve. It also assumes a collective case of national amnesia. It would take a collective case of national amnesia to reach those conclusions because, remember, these are the same folks who gave us the stimulus, who gave us tax increases, who gave us ObamaCare, and all of it was done in the name of helping the little guy, in the name of greater equality.

What has it given us? It has given us this mess we have in our country: record numbers of long-term unemployed, record numbers on food stamps, people losing their health care plans, others seeing the premiums shoot up when they can least afford it, and now another call, one more call, for a government fix.

Washington Democrats have shown almost no interest for 5 years in working together on ways to create the kind of good, stable, high-paying jobs people want and need. This is a real disservice, first and foremost, to those who are struggling the most out there—from the college graduate who suddenly finds herself wondering why she has huge student loan debts but no prospects of work to the 50-year-old dad who has worked his whole adult life but suddenly can't find a job that meets either his needs or his potential. Yet this administration's proposed solution is just to slap another bandaid from Washington on it and call it a day.

Yes, we should work on solutions to support those who are out of work through no fault of their own, but

there is literally no excuse to pass unemployment insurance legislation without also finding ways to create good, stable, high-paying jobs and also trying to find the money to pay for it. So what I am saying is, let us support meaningful job creation measures and let us find a way to pay for these UI benefits so we are not adding to an already completely unsustainable debt.

Unfortunately, the administration seems almost totally disinterested in solutions that don't put government in the lead, and it seems nearly incapable of working with those who don't share that belief. That, in many ways, is precisely why we are in the situation we are in—because it is only when one believes government is the answer to all of our problems that we talk about unemployment insurance instead of job creation and the minimum wage instead of helping people reach their maximum potential.

It is time to get away from “temporary government programs” and give the American people the tools they need to drive an economy that truly works for them and for their families. We could start with one of the real bright spots in our economy; that is, energy, a field that is poised to help our economy create literally millions of jobs, if only the administration would get out of the way.

Another area in which we should be able to work together is health care. By almost any metric—affordability, accessibility, even the ratio of cancellations to enrollments—this law has imposed more pain and more distress than many had ever thought possible. Centrists, moderates, conservatives, just about any sensible person outside the congressional Democratic leadership in Washington has long understood this. But now even the left is starting to come to grips with the painfully obvious fact that the law it fell in love with can't possibly work.

Last week one of the great pooh-bahs of the left admitted that “ObamaCare is awful,” calling it “the dirty little secret many liberals have avoided saying out loud.” I don't agree with that man on much else, including his broader ideas on health care, but it is good to hear a grandee of the left at least admit this isn't working.

His words point to a larger truth, that the President's amen chorus had ample opportunity to speak truth to power when it mattered and that most—most—chose to remain silent. For that the law's apologists have left the American people to pay the price.

Let me read part of a letter I recently received from Jennifer Bell, a constituent of mine in Hopkinsville. This is what she said:

I have less coverage than I did before. I didn't get to keep my policy that I was happy with. Every dollar I have to pay more is a dollar taken from my family. I never thought that in America we would be forced to purchase something we cannot afford. We worked hard to get where we are. Now we are being forced to pay more in order to pay for somebody else's insurance. How is that fair?

I hear you, Jennifer. Everyone on this side of the aisle hears those concerns.

Here is something else. Many Kentuckians are finding ObamaCare is about more than just higher premiums and cuts to Medicare. It is also about a lack of access to doctors and hospitals. One of the most leftwing papers in my State recently ran a big story about how many ObamaCare coverage networks exclude—exclude—so many of the hospitals my constituents want to use.

A few weeks ago, the majority leader basically said criticisms of ObamaCare amounted to jokes. He might like to think this is all some joke, but the constituents who have been writing me about the consequences of this failed law don't see it that way.

I know this must weigh heavily on our Democratic colleagues. I know they can't see so many Americans hurting because of decisions they made and feel absolutely nothing.

Let me say this to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. It is a new year and a time for new beginnings. If you are ready to work with us, we are here. Together we can start over on health care. Together we can give the American people the kind of health care reform they deserve—reform that can lower costs and improve the quality of care.

But as with solving the problems of joblessness and unemployment, it is something we can only do together.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1845, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 265, S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form.

The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on the side supporting the pending motion, there is 15 minutes under the unanimous consent agreement and a similar amount of time on the other side. If all time is used, I would notify Members our rollcall vote will be about 11 o'clock.

I ask unanimous consent that on our side, supporting the motion, I be allowed 5 minutes, Senator REED of Rhode Island 5 minutes, and Senator KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota 5 minutes.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully to the Republican leader today. Here is what he said.

If we are going to give 1.3 million Americans unemployment insurance which has now expired, we have to pay for it. Then he suggested how he would pay for it. He would pay for it by attacking ObamaCare. That is no surprise. But the provision he would attack is the individual mandate—the mandate that people buy health insurance. Well, what is the impact of that? The mandate that people have the responsibility to buy health insurance is necessary if we are going to protect Americans from being discriminated against who have preexisting conditions in their families. Follow me now. In order to make sure a parent with a child who has asthma or a child who has diabetes can still buy health insurance, we needed to expand the insurance pool. We expanded the insurance pool by saying to everyone across America: You have the responsibility to buy health insurance.

So what Senator MCCONNELL, on behalf of Senate Republicans, is suggesting is this: If we are going to give 1.3 million Americans unemployment insurance, we have to say to everyone living in America we can no longer keep our promise that health insurance will not discriminate against your family because of a preexisting condition. Wow. What a tradeoff, 1.3 million people get unemployment benefits over 300 million Americans lose the protection of discrimination in their health insurance because of a preexisting condition in their families. That is the Republican logic: Help the unemployed but at the expense of 300 million American families and their health insurance protection.

It is interesting to note that we have had a dramatic increase in people living in the Commonwealth of Kentucky—represented by Senator MCCONNELL—when it comes to the Affordable Care Act. Governor Beshear, a Democrat, is promoting affordable care in Kentucky and has one of the most successful efforts under way across America. Yet every day the Senators from Kentucky both come to the floor and criticize the very program that is so popular in their State.

The second point I want to make is this: All we are asking for this morning is a vote to start the debate on unemployment insurance benefits. We are asking 5 Republicans to join 55 Democrats to let us debate whether we extend unemployment benefits across America. It is that simple. At about 11:00 that vote will take place.

This used to be a bipartisan issue.

The Presiding Officer of New Jersey is the newest Member of the Senate, and I welcome him again.

There was a time when Republican Presidents thought unemployment compensation was a pretty good idea. Why? Because families with bread-

winners who are out of work need to feed their children, need to feed themselves. Senator MCCONNELL criticizes this program as a temporary government handout. Let me tell you, if you don't have food on the table, you need a temporary helping hand so you can put food on the table so you are strong enough tomorrow to look for jobs again. That is what it is all about, and they don't get it. They say we should be talking about creating jobs. What about creating some food in the bellies of children? What about paying the utility bill or the rent or keeping the lights on or keeping the place that you live warm enough while you are out looking for a job? That is part of the reality facing people across America. There were 81,867 individuals in my home State of Illinois who lost their benefits between Christmas and New Year. They have written me letters.

Ryan, a 35-year-old man with two children from Antioch, IL, writes to me about how difficult it is for him to keep his family together as he continues day after weary day looking for a job. What I hear from the Republican leader is: Well, isn't it a shame that Ryan doesn't have a job? But we can't let government come in and provide the solution.

Well, historically government has stepped up when the private sector cannot or will not. In this case, we know it is absolutely essential.

What we need to have is five Republicans to at least give us a chance this morning at 11 to move forward on the debate on unemployment insurance. This is basic and it is humane. It used to be bipartisan before the tea party takeover of the Republican Party. I hope there are enough moderates left on the Republican side to join us to make this a bipartisan issue again. Helping people keep their families together, the lights on, the heat in their homes, and food on the table while they are looking for a job is not a government giveaway. For goodness sake, it defines who we are as a nation. If we can't stand and help these people looking for work, then it is a sad commentary on who we are, where we are, and our principles.

Finally, this notion of thrashing out at ObamaCare every time there is an issue coming up on the floor has reached its extreme today, when the Republican leader would eliminate the protection against discrimination for preexisting conditions for 300 million Americans in order to provide unemployment benefits for 1.3 million.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, could the Presiding Officer instruct me when I reach the 4-minute mark?

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

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise with my colleagues to support this motion to bring this legislation to the floor to begin a debate.

There were 1.3 million Americans who were pushed off an economic cliff

on December 28 when their extended unemployment benefits ended. They are searching for work. They have to search for work. They are in a market where there are typically two or three applicants for one job.

Yesterday I read a story from the Washington Post that talked about the opening of a new dairy plant in Maryland. They were expecting a lot of interest in the 36 jobs: 1,600 applicants. I would wager that many of those applicants never thought in their lives, after being a vice president of sales in a company or a sophisticated manager of the financial aspects of a company, that they would be applying for work in a dairy. Some of them might even be on extended benefits, and that is the only thing keeping them whole. And they are looking for work, 1,600 applicants for 36 jobs.

This is not unique to Maryland. It is in my home State of Rhode Island. It is in States all across this country, Nevada, Tennessee, Arizona, States with unemployment numbers above the national average of 7 percent. In my case, it is 9 percent. We have to help these families. And as Senator DURBIN pointed out, we have done this on a bipartisan basis until very recently.

This is a smart economic program. This program, according to CBO, will create 200,000 jobs next year if we extend it. Those are 200,000 jobs we are going to give away. And the minority leader was talking about how we have to do more to create jobs around here. Well, if we don't pass this measure, CBO has told us we are going to forfeit 200,000 jobs. So from an economic basis in this country, this is smart. But from a human basis, this helps people who have worked—and the only way you qualify for this program is if you worked and then you are let go through no fault of your own. So we have to do that.

Colleagues on the other side are talking about: Well, we have to pay for these benefits. This is a selective sort of notion, because, frankly, the last time we extended these benefits in January of 2013, it was not offset and the vote was 89–8. It included tax provisions and other provisions, but we extended these benefits, unpaid for, 89–8. Yet now we have to pay for these benefits.

What Senator HELLER and I have done is said: Listen, we need to help these people now. Let's do a 90-day extension, provide retroactive relief, and help these 1.3 million—and it will grow, because several million more people will lose their benefits this year. Let's do it, and then let's sit down and work on this program.

But let me also remind my colleagues, we have made significant changes to the unemployment insurance program. In early 2012, we had a conference report between the House and the Senate which made changes in unemployment insurance. We reduced the total time from 99 weeks to 73 weeks. We created the work-sharing

program, a very innovative program which allows people to collect for part of the week but also stay employed the rest of the week. It is a program which has helped companies all across the country, small companies in particular. We have given States more flexibility on job training. We have given States more flexibility in oversight of their programs. We have made changes. We are willing to listen to thoughtful proposals again. But we can't do it on the backs of 1.3 million Americans who have lost the only benefit they have.

If we really want to talk about job training, if we want to talk about co-operation, why haven't we been able to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act since 1998? We have not made the changes in workforce training that affect this whole country—not just the unemployed but those young people who are trying to move out of high school and junior college into the workforce. We haven't done it. Why? Well, from 1998 until 2007, we had a Republican Congress. Since 2007, we have been struggling very mightily with an economic crisis. And we have made progress.

But if we want to start cooperating, let's bring the Workforce Investment Act to the floor. It has passed the committee on a bipartisan basis. Let's bring it to the floor. Let's help people.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DURBIN. Would the Senator yield for a question?

How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask the Senator from Rhode Island under that time to yield for the following question.

I don't know if the Senator was on the floor when the Republican leader said he wanted to pay for the cost of these unemployment benefits by eliminating the individual mandate under the Affordable Care Act—which is the key element in protecting families who have children with preexisting conditions—cancer survivors, children with diabetes, children with asthma. As I understood the Republican leader, he believes that the best way to take care of people who are unemployed and can't feed their children is to deny the protections of the Affordable Care Act for those families who have children with preexisting conditions. Would the Senator from Rhode Island comment on whether that is a good trade for either side?

Mr. REED. I think it is a terrible trade. It is not just about families with children, it is about many of these working adults who, if they have a pre-existing condition, lose their coverage. It is not just a question of children. That I think is very sensitive. Without the Affordable Care Act, if you get sick, you can't get coverage. The only way you can get coverage if you are middle-aged is if you are healthy and you don't need it. When you needed it, the insurance companies took it away—before the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. DURBIN. If I might ask another question to the Senator from Rhode Island from the time allotted on our side, I listened carefully to the speech given by the Republican leader this morning.

I see my colleague from New York here, so I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my friends from Illinois and Rhode Island.

How much time is remaining on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 1 minute 30 seconds.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I see what is going on here. Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle know the power of this issue but don't really want to vote for it, and so they are putting impossible logjams in the path.

Who would believe that on this side of the aisle we would delay an important part of the ACA which would hurt—as my colleagues from Illinois and Rhode Island brought out—parents who have kids with cancer? We are not going to do that, and we are not going to do it on the fly.

So what I would say to my colleagues is if you believe in unemployment benefits and extending them, pass them clean and simple. Don't play games. Don't put obstacles in their path that you know would be insurmountable. Get it done.

I make one other point. The bottom line is very simple: People want to work. People who have lost their jobs after working decades for a company are knocking on doors every day. They are going online. They are desperate to work.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. This idea that unemployment benefits encourage them not to work is balderdash.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. I yield back all time on the Republican side.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 265, S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Martin Heinrich, Thomas R. Carper, Charles E. Schumer, Dianne Feinstein, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Angus S. King, Jr., Al Franken, Tom Harkin, Jeff Merkley, Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Barbara Boxer, Richard Blumenthal, Sherrod Brown.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) would have voted "nay."

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 60, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 2 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Ayotte	Hagan	Murphy
Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Baucus	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Portman
Blumenthal	Heller	Pryor
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Brown	Kaine	Rockefeller
Cantwell	King	Sanders
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schatz
Carper	Landrieu	Schumer
Casey	Leahy	Shaheen
Coats	Levin	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—37

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rubio
Chambliss	Inhofe	Scott
Coburn	Isakson	Sessions
Cochran	Johanns	Shelby
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—3

Begich	Hatch	Thune
--------	-------	-------

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 60, the nays are 37. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Mr. LEVIN. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mrs. BOXER. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is not an order to reconsider; it is a separate cloture motion.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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