

According to the librarian who worked with him—and subsequently resigned because of the treatment of this man—the man was rarely able to comprehend sentences, was unable to sound out words, and does not have the ability to read documents he was asked to sign. She was worried about his ability to even understand the debt he was signing on for, the student loan debt at one of these Everest Colleges.

It apparently didn't matter to Everest. They were ready to sign him up into college. As long as this man was eligible to take out Federal loans, Everest was going to get paid. The man was just an ATM machine spitting out dollars to Everest Colleges.

Is that outrageous, to think they would lure someone with a disability into signing up?

The list goes on and on, including Ashford University, another one of these for-profit colleges and universities.

The obvious question we have to ask is this: When will our Department of Education and when will this Congress address this travesty? What is existing across the United States with these for-profit colleges and universities is an outrage, and it is exploiting the students and their families.

Sadly, a couple of weeks ago we tried to pass a bill on the floor of the Senate so that students could renegotiate their student loans and bring down the interest rates. Every Democrat voted for it. We needed 5 Republicans out of 45 to join us so that students in States such as New Jersey and Illinois could renegotiate their student loan rates down and make them more affordable. We got three Republicans: Senator COLLINS of Maine, Senator CORKER of Tennessee, and Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska. We needed two more to start the debate about renegotiating college loans.

I think we have to wake up here. This debt families across America are facing—44 million individuals paying college loans—is an outrage. Part of it was started by these for-profit schools, but another part of it just reflects a debt that is out of control, and we ought to be more sensitive to it.

We are going to call this again. ELIZABETH WARREN brought the bill to the floor. This time we are going to hope that some of our Republican colleagues go home to their States and in town meetings actually speak with families who are paying college student loans. If they will, I think they will understand they should join us in this effort: to give these college students and their families a fighting chance to pay off their loans and to reform this higher education system to stop the outrageous conduct by these for-profit colleges and universities.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### LEGISLATIVE LOGJAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last summer I said it felt as though the White House had hung a "Gone Campaignin'" sign outside the Oval Office. President Obama didn't seem the least bit interested in passing serious, bipartisan solutions for the middle class. It was all campaigning, all the time.

On the rarest of occasions when he did come to Congress, it was for internal campaign rallies with his party. Well, it has actually only gotten worse.

Since last summer he has barely picked up the phone and his bill-signing pen is literally starting to rust. Here is the reason: This summer the Democratic-controlled Senate seems to have put out a "Gone Campaignin'" sign of its own. That is why the Democratic Senate has become a veritable graveyard of good ideas.

Most people assume the purpose of the Senate is to pass legislation to help the American people, but these days the Democrats who run the Senate seem to think their role is actually to just bury good legislation. They are more interested in pleasing their far left political patrons—patrons who appear to oppose everything that could actually help the American middle class.

Case in point: The Republican-led House of Representatives has already passed hundreds of pieces of legislation this Congress—legislation introduced by Members of both parties, including dozens of jobs bills, that remain stuck here in the Senate. That means President Obama has not had to sign or veto them, and the Senate majority leader has been all too happy to protect him from choosing between helping the far-left fringe and the vast American middle. In other words, Senate Democrats are on a mission this summer to obstruct solutions for the middle class at every turn and to prevent almost any serious legislating from occurring at all—at all.

Over in the House the minority party has been offered more than 160 votes on their amendments since last July. Here in the Senate the Democratic leadership has blocked all but nine Republican rollcall votes.

And it is not just Republican amendments getting squashed either. The Democrats who run the Senate are so scared of legislating these days they are blocking virtually every amendment on both sides. It has gotten to the point where one House Democrat, a Congresswoman from Texas, has now had twice as many rollcall votes on amendments since last July—15—as the entire Senate Democratic caucus combined. One Member of the House in the minority party has had more votes than all of the Democratic Senators combined over the last year. Between the 55 Senate Democrats, they have had seven amendments in a year.

In other words, the majority leader is treating his one caucus even worse than he is treating us.

Even committee work can no longer escape the Democratic majority's political obsession. The majority shut down the committee process on important legislation that should have been and would have been bipartisan—bills about patents and appropriations.

This is the kind of stuff that makes Americans so very mad at Washington. I mean, how do we justify stifling the voices of so many Senators and the tens of millions of Americans they were sent here to represent? It is indefensible. It has gotten worse and worse under current Democratic leaders.

Of course, every now and then, when we push hard enough, we are able to force our Democratic friends to allow a few—a few—bipartisan ideas to go through, such as the job training and workforce development bill we expect to pass tomorrow. But, boy, that is the rare exception around here—a very rare exception. Instead, we usually just see the game playing on important issues.

On energy, Democratic leadership blocked every attempt to provide relief to blue collar families who have been bulldozed by the administration's elitist war on coal jobs. They will not help the millions of Americans who struggle every single day with high utility bills, and they will not allow a serious vote on shovel-ready projects such as the Keystone Pipeline, either. Senate Democrats have blocked just about every effort to move forward on these issues. In so doing the Democratic leadership actually embarrasses the handful of Democratic Senators who still call for action on energy and Keystone—even veteran Members who chair committees. It just shows what little influence those Members actually have under the current Democratic leadership.

It all lays bare a very simple truth about today's Democratic Senate: If the far left hates it, it ain't happening.

That is true with health care too. The middle class is being plummeted by ObamaCare. A recent study showed that an average 27-year-old Kentuckian from Taylor County saw his premiums skyrocket by almost 60 percent this year. Constituents such as he are looking to Washington for leadership and for solutions, but Senate Democrats will not even allow sensible bipartisan health care solutions to come to a vote.

Instead, we just get more politics, such as the legislation we hear may be coming up later this week—a tactic designed by the Democratic campaign committee to make Americans forget—forget—that Democrats voted to raid Medicare—voted to raid Medicare—by \$700 billion to fund new ObamaCare spending. Every Democrat in the Senate, on Christmas Eve, 2009, without exception, voted to take \$700 billion out of Medicare to help fund ObamaCare.

Senate Democrats are actually trying to distract from their votes to raid Medicare by making it even harder to

save and strengthen Medicare. But Americans will not forget that the sponsors of the proposal were the very same people who voted to raid Medicare in the first place, through ObamaCare.

And they will not forget what happened last week either when Republicans advanced a series of bills aimed at increasing flexibility in the workplace and boosting upward mobility. We thought Democrats might want to work with us in a bipartisan manner to move these bills forward, but apparently the far left will not let them. Democratic leadership will not even consider legislation I have introduced that would help more moms and dads work from home while caring for young children. My bill aims to bring tax policy in line with what life is really like for working parents, and it would help young families save on child care costs too. But as I said, Senate Democrats have just gone campaigning.

For the Democratic leadership, helping the middle class seems to be far from priority one. But the middle class needs help right now, and the only way to offer working moms and struggling college graduates real solutions is to break through the Senate Democratic logjam.

There are two ways to accomplish that. Either our friends on the other side can get serious about working for the people who elected them or the people who elected them can make the decision for them.

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

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

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday the White House held its Summit on Working Families. On the summit's Web site, the White House notes: "Too many working Americans—both men and women—are living paycheck to paycheck, struggling to make ends meet and respond to the competing demands of work and family." That, unfortunately, is the truth.

But what the White House does not acknowledge is how much its policies have done to create that situation. Working families have not fared well under the Obama administration. Household income has fallen by \$3,500 on the President's watch. Meanwhile, prices for nearly everything have risen. Food prices have gone up. Tuition costs are soaring. Airline fares are rising. The cost of recreational activities, such as going to the movies, has risen. And energy prices are placing a huge burden on American families.

Gas prices have nearly doubled since the President took office. Low-income

families in my State of South Dakota pay an average of 24 percent of their income on energy costs alone. And things are set to get much worse.

This month the President's EPA announced plans to implement a massive energy tax on Americans. Thanks to this tax, energy bills could rise to crippling levels for many families in the next few years. That is not what families need, especially—especially—when they are already paying huge amounts for health care.

ObamaCare was supposed to make things better for American families. The President assured the American people that his health care law would reduce premiums by \$2,500. But since ObamaCare passed, not only have premiums not fallen, they have actually risen—gone up—by \$2,500.

Millions of Americans were forced off the health plans they were promised they could keep and into exchange plans that frequently cost more money and offer less. Too many American families now have exchange plans with massive deductibles—some as high as \$12,000 or more.

What middle-class family can afford to pay \$12,000 a year for medical care—\$12,000 on top of their premiums? That is like having an additional mortgage payment every single month. It is no wonder 54 percent of Americans do not think the President "is able to lead the country and get the job done," according to a recent Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll.

So what can you do if you are a working family living paycheck to paycheck and struggling with the high cost of everything from health care to gasoline? Well, over the past few years the answer has been not much because opportunities are few and far between in the Obama economy. Instead of promoting policies to create jobs, too often the President has proposed policies that kill jobs.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has reported that ObamaCare will cause 2.5 million full-time workers to leave the workforce. Mr. President, 2.6 million Americans earning less than \$30,000 are in danger of having their hours and wages cut thanks to ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek rule. Mr. President, 63 percent of those workers are women.

The President and his party have also pushed hard for a minimum wage hike the Congressional Budget Office said would destroy up to 1 million jobs. Low-income Americans would be hit the hardest by that.

Then there is the President's national energy tax. In addition to raising energy bills for all Americans, the President's energy tax would result in the loss of tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of jobs. The rule would gut the coal industry, putting tens of thousands of workers out of work there.

It is difficult to reconcile the President's ostensible commitment to families with a policy that would put thou-

sands and thousands of parents out of a job.

The Keystone XL Pipeline would allow the President to put thousands of Americans to work. With a stroke of his pen, the President could sign off on this project and the 42,000-plus jobs it would support. Instead, he has ignored American workers and union leaders and chosen to pander to the wishes of his extremist environmental base.

The American people need jobs—steady, good-paying, long-term jobs with opportunities for advancement. Democrats and the President are not giving that to them. Instead of spending time on real job-creation measures, the majority leader has chosen to waste the Senate's time on gimmicky, politically motivated legislation.

If Democrats were serious about providing real relief to American families, they would be working with Republicans on the many bills we have proposed to spur job creation and to support American workers—bills such as Senator COLLINS' Forty Hours Is Full-Time Act, which would repeal the ObamaCare 30-hour workweek rule, which is resulting in lower wages and fewer hours for American workers; or Senator FISCHER's workplace advancement amendment, which would further equip women with the tools and knowledge they need to fight discrimination in the workplace; and Senator RUBIO's RAISE Act, which would amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow employers to give merit-based pay increases to individual employees, even if those increases are not part of a collective bargaining agreement; and Senator MCCONNELL's Working Parents Home Office Act, which would fix a flaw in the Tax Code that prevents men and women from claiming a home office deduction if their home office has a baby crib so they can care for their child while they are working.

President Obama has talked about the importance of flextime for parents so they can adjust their work hours for parent-teacher conferences or soccer games. Well, Senator LEE has a bill that would help workers handle the constant challenge of work-life balance by allowing private-sector employers to offer all individuals who work overtime a choice between monetary compensation and comp time. Unfortunately, like so many other Republican bills, the Lee Working Families Flexibility Act is buried in the majority leader's Senate graveyard.

Traditionally thought of as a place where bills go to be debated, the Senate has, instead, become the place where bills go to die. But it is not just bills that go to die here; it is the solutions to improve the lives of millions of Americans. In addition to the many Senate Republican jobs bills that the majority leader has prevented from seeing the light of day, there are dozens—literally dozens—of House-passed jobs bills—several of them bipartisan—that the majority leader refuses to bring up. The Senate historically has