

President's call for TPA renewal. TPA is one of the few issues where both parties can and should be able to work together to achieve a common goal.

I know that I, along with my Republican colleagues, stand ready and willing to work with the administration to approve TPA as soon as possible. I think I have a reputation of working across the aisle and bringing people together. This is one I want to bring people together on—and I shouldn't even have to argue about it, but I do.

I believe the bipartisan bill Chairman BAUCUS and I recently introduced to renew TPA would receive strong bipartisan support in the Senate if it were allowed to come up for a vote. Indeed, I am confident that the vast majority of my colleagues would join me in supporting the bill, both Democrats and Republicans.

The problem is Republicans are not in the majority in the Senate. It is the Democrats who control the agenda. Unfortunately, the President's call to renew TPA does not appear to be a priority for some of the Democrats, certainly the leadership of the Democrats.

The question is, Will Senate Democrats work with the President on this issue? I don't know the answer to that question, but I have to say that things don't look very good to me. Instead of robust support for the President and his trade agenda, the response we have seen from some Democrats has ranged from awkward silence on TPA to outright hostility. Needless to say, I am extremely disappointed by this.

The issue is fairly simple. If we want to grow our economy through trade, Congress must approve TPA and do so soon. The President can play a unique and key role. By forcefully advocating for TPA renewal, he can help turn some of the skeptics in his party around.

Recently, the Financial Times published a powerful editorial which outlined the need for TPA and the role the President must play for TPA to succeed.

According to the editorial:

Twenty years ago, President Bill Clinton pulled out all the stops to push through approval of the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada. He was able to squeak through a narrow victory by deft lobbying of lawmakers and a willingness to make a strong case for globalization to the American public. Mr. Obama is lagging behind his predecessor on both counts. The case for TTIP and TPP are both strong. The time for Mr. Obama to make these arguments has arrived. He has every incentive to succeed. Failure to secure [TPA] would be a grievous blow to his presidency.

I understand there are some powerful critical forces that leave some of my friends on the other side of the aisle to oppose international trade. However, let's be clear: If we fail to approve TPA, we will be doing our Nation and our economy a great disservice. International trade is good for our country. It is one of the few tools Congress has to grow our economy that does not add

to the Federal deficit. As I mentioned, Senator BAUCUS and I, along with Chairman CAMP, have negotiated and introduced a bipartisan, bicameral TPA bill. It is, in my opinion, the only TPA bill that stands a chance of getting passed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have a choice. They can either work with the Republicans to pass our bill and empower our country to complete these important trade agreements, or they can throw up more roadblocks and cast more uncertainty on the President's trade agenda.

As I stated, Republicans stand ready to work with President Obama on these issues and to help these trade negotiations to succeed. For the sake of our country and our economy, I sincerely hope my Democratic colleagues and friends in the Senate are willing to do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, I come to the floor to discuss the recent report by the Congressional Budget Office, the CBO, which contains updated estimates of the insurance coverage provisions of the Affordable Care Act, also known as ObamaCare.

It was just on Sunday the President told Bill O'Reilly of Fox News—in front of all America on Super Bowl Sunday—that his health care bill is working. Today, the Congressional Budget Office has changed that tune. We learned from the report that ObamaCare will now cost us \$2 trillion. People may recall President Obama told the country his bill would cost less than \$1 trillion. We also learned that we are expected to lose—expected to lose—2.5 million full-time jobs over the next 10 years. Finally, the CBO says exchange subsidies under the ACA will reduce incentives to work.

Let me go over that again. President Obama told the country his bill would cost less than \$1 trillion. Now the CBO says it will be \$2 trillion. We are expected to lose 2.5 million full-time jobs over next 10 years. Finally, CBO says exchange subsidies under the ACA will reduce incentives to work.

If this is working, what does “broken” mean to this President?

As I am reading this report and accompanying reaction, the most recent updates sound hauntingly familiar. In fact, I believe this is something that I and my colleagues spoke about every day during the debate on health care reform. We questioned at that time whether the CBO estimates accurately reflected the impact of ObamaCare on the American people, which leads to why I am on the floor as of this evening. This is about accountability, folks.

During the debate, we questioned whether the scoring done by the CBO was fraught with gimmicks or an unrealistic belief that Medicare would achieve significant savings in the future.

I have serious concerns with the accuracy of the scoring done on ObamaCare and its portrayal of the impact of this legislation versus the stated benefits for the American people.

We cannot keep doing this. There are people's lives at stake, people's lives that we are dealing with. The CBO projections during the health care reform debate seemed to significantly underestimate the negative impact of ObamaCare. Because of those projections, supporters were able to jam it through—one vote, everybody knows about that vote—and now the American people have to pick up the tab on the CBO's errors.

I am calling for hearings in the Finance Committee, upon which I sit, to demand CBO come before the committee and explain to the Congress and the American people why and how its scores, which led to the passage of ObamaCare, did not tell the whole story. This is about accountability for past actions, and we must ask the question, the difficult question, an unfortunate question: Was this political? Were the books cooked?

CBO needs to take the responsibility for the differences between their projections and the most recent updates just released as of this morning. We must have accurate estimates on the costs and benefits of the legislation so we can do our jobs. This shouldn't be about politics or gaming the system. This is about people's lives, and it is our responsibility to get that right. Let the hearings begin. Let the CBO provide answers. The CBO must answer this Congress and America.

I yield back the remainder of my time, 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. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

PROTECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on December 22, 2004, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the beginning of a second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. As we enter the final year of this international campaign we should remind ourselves of the importance of protecting indigenous populations and take stock of what has

been achieved and what more needs to be done.

I have always believed that as we advance and defend our national interests around the globe we must also fulfill our moral obligations. As chairman or ranking member of the subcommittee that funds the Department of State and foreign operations for over two decades, I have had a unique vantage point from which to watch globalization evolve and test our Nation's commitment to its ideals. As the world's population swells, technology advances, and competition for energy and natural resources intensifies, the rights and needs of indigenous populations are threatened by governments and corporations seeking to exploit the ground on which they have built their lives and preserved their cultures and the wealth beneath it.

This has been the reality for too many indigenous cultures, and it is no surprise that they are among the most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations on Earth. These groups have distinct ways of life and histories, tied to land they have inhabited and protected for thousands of years. But their established roots rarely afford them representation in governments that hide behind laws and regulations proclaiming equal treatment for indigenous populations who have virtually no role in the political process.

Recognizing that indigenous peoples have unique rights and needs that the rest of humanity has a responsibility to protect, several years ago I undertook to create the position of advisor for indigenous peoples' issues at the U.S. Agency for International Development. I am pleased that USAID recently established this office to implement and coordinate a comprehensive, U.S. Government strategy on indigenous peoples, with specific goals, guidelines, benchmarks, and impact assessments, including support for indigenous peoples' organizations.

The selection of Brian Keane to fill this role is an early indicator that it will be addressed proactively. Brian, who has devoted his professional life to these issues, will work to ensure that U.S. Government policies and programs around the world are carried out in a manner that respects the rights of indigenous peoples and responds to their needs. Brian's work in indigenous communities all across the globe, and his advocacy on behalf of indigenous peoples to inform international policy making, has prepared him for his task.

This position must not be merely a symbolic post. From the Amazon rainforest to the Kalahari Desert, indigenous peoples have for centuries faced existential threats due to racism, greed, misguided policies of forced assimilation, and indifference. However, for the surviving groups, the length of their struggle belies the acuteness of the threat. In Brazil, the Guarani people have been driven from their land and are plagued by alcoholism, poverty, and a suicide rate many times the

national average, replaced by expanding sugarcane farms.

Anthropologists explain that the loss of land by indigenous groups often leads to social disintegration and economic dependence on the state, as we know only too well from our own experience. We see it in places like Botswana, where the San people, traditionally nomads, have been uprooted from their ancestral lands to make way for diamond mines, forced into settlements, and exposed to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Their way of life, which the Botswana Government should be protecting, instead is being destroyed.

The circumstances of each indigenous culture, whose members total as many as 400 million people worldwide, differs from continent to continent but they face similar threats. To defend their rights, protect their land, and preserve their cohesiveness, a key policy change is needed. We must commit to honoring the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.

For too long, governments, often including our own, have paid lip service to consulting native populations as a substitute for obtaining their consent for actions that directly affect them. More often than not, such consultations have been cursory or conducted in a manner that divides members of indigenous communities against each other. I am pleased that in 2010 President Obama formally declared our Nation's support for the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, reversing the position that the United States had held since the declaration's adoption in 2007.

While that was a positive step, combatting discrimination against indigenous peoples requires more than policy statements, it requires action. That is why I want to highlight the ongoing threat to these populations and call attention to the new position of advisor for indigenous peoples' issues.

In today's globalized world, ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples is everyone's responsibility. Respect for their rights is not only necessary for their continued survival as distinct cultures but also to help ensure the well-being of the entire planet. Whether we are talking about biodiversity protection, climate change or sustainable development, indigenous peoples have much to offer. Their ancestral knowledge, developed over millennia, has been vital to preserving what is left of the world's critical ecosystems and can play a key role in finding solutions to challenges that humanity is currently facing.

I look forward to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly that will take place at the United Nations in September of this year. Its main objective is to share perspectives and best practices on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples and to pursue the objectives of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The World Con-

ference provides an important chance to give real meaning to the principles expressed in the declaration and is a historic opportunity for the United States to lead the international community by putting forward a concrete plan of action aimed at ensuring that the collective rights of indigenous peoples, including the right to free, prior and informed consent, are recognized and respected.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I wish to speak about the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. I am joined on the floor today by my friend Senator BAUCUS, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, to stress the program's importance.

Today CHIP provides health coverage to over 37,000 children in West Virginia and over 8 million children across the United States in working families who cannot afford private health insurance. These kids deserve a healthy start in life. They are our future leaders and decisionmakers. They deserve the opportunities this program provides.

Mr. BAUCUS. I thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for speaking today on this important issue. I have always admired the Senator's hard work and dedication to provide health coverage not just to the children of West Virginia but children across the United States. He has been a real inspiration to me and many of our colleagues.

Back in 2007 and 2009, Senator ROCKEFELLER and I worked together with fellow Democrats and Republicans to reauthorize CHIP. The legislation brought legislators together from both sides of the aisle because CHIP was not about politics, it was about helping kids. Even 10 years prior to that, the original legislation that created the Children's Health Insurance Program passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. CHIP has always been very popular. Bottom line is this program works. It works for children and it works for America.

Unfortunately, while this program has been authorized through the year 2019, the funding expires next year. I believe it is critical for the Senate to continue to fund CHIP beyond 2015 in order to continue to provide essential health coverage to our lower income children and pregnant women. I regret I will not be here to carry on the work of helping these families.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I agree with Senator BAUCUS. Without the funds to run this program, millions of children will lose health care coverage. Before CHIP was established in 1997, 23 percent of low-income children were uninsured. Today, according to the Urban Institute, that number has dropped to 12.8 percent. I believe that number should be zero; no child should be without access to the coverage they need to grow up healthy and happy. Thanks to this program and other sources of coverage, we are on our way to achieving