

only way we have ever been able to get this done in the past. We expect that will be the only way to get it done in the future. We will press it across the countryside.

We ask our fellow Americans. This issue is one that concerns them. I don't know a single member of our side who would not support an increase in the minimum wage. I hope they will understand that when they go to the polls.

#### THE MEDICAL DEVICE USE FEE AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2002

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I bring to the attention of the membership the bill H.R. 5651, the Medical Device User Fee and Modernization Act of 2002. It has now passed the House of Representatives. We have been working on this legislation for 10 years. It has been a divisive issue, both the issue and as a public policy issue. We finally have virtual support from the Members in the House of Representatives, the committees of jurisdiction, and also the Members here. There may be Members who have questions. We are prepared to answer those.

I indicate this is a public health matter of enormous importance and consequence. If Members are going to object, they are going to have to come to the floor of the Senate and express those objections and reasons. We will not tolerate someone holding up this bill in hopes that they can get it carried back to the House. We have worked too long. We have worked too hard. This is an enormously important health issue. We will not tolerate it. I will not tolerate it. Those members of our committee will not tolerate it.

I want to make it very clear, if they ever expect any kind of cooperation on any other health matters, they had better understand the importance and significance of this measure—if they ever expect any cooperation on any health matters down the road.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The Senator from Indiana.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I begin by thanking our colleague from Massachusetts for his impassioned advocacy of this important issue. It is a cause that both the Chair and I support wholeheartedly. The Senator from Massachusetts has been a tireless advocate of raising the minimum wage for many years. It is my privilege to join with him. This is an issue whose time has come. It needs to be done, and we need a sense of urgency for those on the other side of the aisle and this administration. I thank my colleague once again.

Mr. President, let me share some thoughts about the importance of extending coverage for the unemployed in our country. Given the weakness of our economy, I think this is a critically

important issue that will help millions of our fellow citizens who are suffering unemployment through no fault of their own. It is also an important component of a coherent economic strategy to get America working again.

As you and others know all too well, the economy is weak, people are out of work, we need leadership to get the economy moving, people back to employment, and to help those who have suffered unemployment, putting money back into people's pockets to put it back into the economy to create jobs and growth. Extending unemployment benefits is an important part of that strategy, an idea whose time has come, a lot like raising the minimum wage.

The economy is not doing well. Unemployment has risen. Long-term unemployment in September was 1.6 million working men and women. Household income for the typical family has fallen for the first time in a decade. Home foreclosures have reached a 30-year high. Poverty rates across America rose last year. Regrettably, the economy seems unlikely to reverse its sluggish course anytime soon. Manufacturing has slowed. Retail sales are weak. Capital investment has declined. Foreign demand for American goods and services is stalled.

As a result, job creation actually declined last year. Many Americans are hard hit, and others are worried they will be next. Mr. President, 1.1 million Americans had exhausted their unemployment benefits as of August. This figure is expected to double to 2.2 million hard-working Americans as soon as December—regrettably, just in time for the Christmas season.

In my own home State of Indiana, we have not been unaffected. Twenty-one thousand hard-working Hoosiers have exhausted unemployment benefits as of August. This figure will more than double to 45,000 by December. There is no State in the Union that is unaffected by this unfortunate state of affairs. These Americans need a helping hand. I want to emphasize that it is not only the compassionate thing to do, but it is the economically sensible thing to do as well, because not only are we helping individuals who are in need, we are also helping the economy get back on its feet and thereby helping all Americans, be they employed or unemployed.

We need stimulus for job growth and economic expansion. These benefits will be used for consumer spending. Economists have long recognized that helping those who are unemployed leads directly to added demand in the economy. Labor Department statistics, in fact, indicate that there is a significant multiplier effect. For every \$1 that goes into unemployment benefits, a full \$2.15 is added to the gross domestic product. By any definition, \$1 into \$2.15 of increase to the gross domestic product is a good investment for the American people.

Consumers are stressed right now. They have high levels of debt. They

have tapped into their home equity at rates that could be unsustainable. The tax cut of last year has run its course. There are other reasons to believe consumers may be cutting back on their purchases. Adding about \$17 billion to consumption through extending unemployment benefits will help the consumers maintain their course, allowing the economy to hang in there until capital investment comes back and demand from abroad picks up.

What is more, we can afford this at this time. It is fiscally sustainable and responsible. There is more than \$27 billion currently in the unemployment trust fund, more than sufficient to cover the costs extending unemployment benefits, as I and others are proposing. So this will not mean an increase in the annual deficit or in America's debt. We can do what is right for individuals, what is right for the economy, and do so in a fiscally responsible way.

I ask that we adopt this measure. It will extend unemployment benefits eligibility by 13 additional weeks for every State across the Union. It will add an additional 7 weeks for those States with the highest rates of unemployment and adjust the trigger mechanism to expand eligibility to make sure that the reality of unemployment across the Nation is reflected in the law.

Also, I ask for a new sense of urgency from this administration when it comes to promoting economic growth. The last time I was privileged to speak to my colleagues on the floor it was to call for support of the President's initiative and resolution with regard to Iraq. We generated substantial bipartisan support for that resolution. I ask the administration and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring that same sense of urgency and bipartisan cooperation to the cause of improving our domestic economy. After all, in the long run it is the foundation upon which our national security is built.

There is precedent for these steps. The President's own father took these steps back in the early 1990s, expanding unemployment eligibility by the same number of weeks, including the same mechanism for determining eligibility. That proposal at that time passed by 94 to 2. It was the right thing to do to get the economy moving in the early 1990s. It is the right thing today. It received overwhelming bipartisan support at that time. It will receive, if we can get a vote, overwhelming bipartisan support today. It was advocated by the first President Bush. It is a cause this President Bush should also embrace to promote economic growth.

I ask we move forward with this initiative and that the President demonstrate he is truly the compassionate conservative that he campaigned to be.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 619, S. 3009, a bill to provide for a 13-week