

Let me also thank my colleagues for their support, for their encouragement, and for the friendship they have given me these many months and years. At this time in particular in my life, I am extraordinarily grateful for that. I wish to express that in the most heartfelt way.

The 107th Congress was filled with history—filled in the way we elected a President, the way we governed as a 50–50 Senate, and in the way we addressed so many issues. I have no doubt that the momentous decisions made during the 107th Congress will be recorded and reported and analyzed and considered for generations to come. We begin a new Congress and a new day with a new spirit and a new mood for the recognition of new responsibilities and a new opportunity to write history.

Just yesterday, as I was coming back from South Dakota, an older woman stopped me in the airport. She pulled me at my arm. And she said: Senator DASCHLE, do your best. Do your best, and remember that history is in your hands.

I think that is our charge—to do our best, to recognize that history is now in our hands, and that as we face the challenges and the responsibilities as Senators in the 108th Congress, I hope we can look back with satisfaction, with pride and with a realization that, indeed, we did our best.

(Applause. Senators rising.)

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PROVISION OF A 5-MONTH EXTENSION OF THE TEMPORARY EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION ACT OF 2002

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. 23, an unemployment insurance extension bill introduced today by Senators FITZGERALD, CLINTON, and others; further, that the bill be read the third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be one amendment in order which would provide benefits for those who have previously exhausted their Federal unemployment benefits—approximately 1 million Americans and over 150,000 New Yorkers—that there be a time limitation on the amendment of 30 minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form, and that no other amendments or motions be in order to the bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I object.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, a number of Senators on both sides of the aisle have been very aggressively working on this

legislation for, indeed, several months and most intensively over the last several days. I believe we have reached a bipartisan agreement to allow us to pass the bill today so that the House will consider it and in order for it to become public law this week.

As most of my colleagues in the Senate Chamber know, if this bill is not passed by Thursday and signed by the President of the United States, there will be tremendous dislocation among the American people. With that, I urge that we proceed with the underlying unanimous consent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). Is there objection to the initial request?

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I thank the majority leader for bringing this very important matter to the floor so early in our session. I also thank my colleague from Oklahoma, Senator NICKLES, for working with me and others over the last week to try to reach consensus. While I do not object at all to this final bill—in fact, I am a lead Democratic sponsor—I would point out that passage of this bill, as important as it is, will leave many, many people without any means of support, and I think that we must turn our attention to these people who have exhausted their benefits. I look forward to working with the majority and minority leader in doing so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I would simply also comment those responsible for bringing the resolution to this point. We could have accomplished this in the last Congress, but we were unable to complete our work. I remind my colleagues that by simply passing this resolution we are leaving out over 1 million people who have absolutely no recourse and have no assistance whatsoever because their benefits have expired. We are leaving them out. This will only address those who are about to see their benefits expire—about one-half of the 1 million people who otherwise would be eligible for these benefits.

To simply say we are doing half means that we are doing half the job. We are leaving half on the table. We are leaving 1 million people with absolutely no recourse in their efforts to try to bring about any quality of life in these difficult times.

So I urge my colleagues to reconsider. We will continue to offer this with the hope that we can find some resolution, that we can include all 2 million unemployed workers, and that we do so as quickly as is possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as I understand it, if we do not accept the unanimous consent request proposed by the Senator from New York, we will leave 1 million

Americans without unemployment compensation benefits at a time they desperately need it. I also understand her amendment simply calls for 30 minutes of debate and a vote. I think it would be appropriate to vote.

If the majority leader can give us some indication as to when we will deal with the issue of these 1 million people who will be without benefits, I think it might help us as we try to respond and decide on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, and I will not object, while the Senators who had expressed their concerns may be correct, I believe we should commend those who have worked so hard to get this bill here, and our majority leader for bringing it up today because, while we wait to do some more, if more is needed, we will leave all of the unemployed without any new benefits. That is the issue. To do it today is to do it the way it is proposed. To debate it, or send it back to committee for refinement, means none of them will get benefits—not only those who have run out of benefits, but there will be no extension and no money.

I believe it is good that we comment, but it is better that we proceed and get the bill done.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, prior to our taking a recess, we begged the administration to do something to allow us to pass unemployment benefits for the people we knew would be out of unemployment benefits. We in Nevada now have thousands of people who need those benefits. I heard my friend from New York say there are 150,000 people who need them in her State. I believe that is the figure she used. But regardless, there are thousands and thousands of people all over this country, adding up to a million, who need these benefits.

We on this side of the aisle believe we should do everything. I have to respectfully say to my friend, the majority leader, and his colleagues, the reason they are not going to allow us to vote is we would win the vote. We would win if we were allowed to vote to include all 2 million people who are desperately in need of these unemployment checks. We would win the vote.

I do not believe we should adjourn today until this matter is resolved. We want a vote. The people of America want a vote. The people we are leaving out are the ones who are in most need. There is no question the people we would help by passing this resolution need the help, but the million people are those who are chronically unemployed and are in desperate need of help.

We should not adjourn today until we are allowed to have a vote on this most

important resolution with the amendment that has been offered by the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, it is important that we take care of these individuals who will be left out without the amendment by Senator CLINTON. The issue is, unemployment benefits not only help these individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own—whether it is the Boeing Company in a downturn or other people impacted by 9/11 who have lost their jobs and need these unemployment benefits—but more importantly, unemployment benefits are also an economic stimulus. Economists have said every \$1 spent on unemployment insurance generates \$2.15 of economic stimulus.

I can think of no better package for us to support in a bipartisan fashion than putting more dollars into our local economies that are hurting. I know our State, with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, has an economic forecast that says the next 6 months will not get any better. So if not today, I say to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, when will we realize this is an economic stimulus package that we must support.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, my understanding is this unemployment extension mirrors the unemployment extension we did in the last session of Congress. We extended benefits for 13 weeks.

There are some for which the 26 weeks plus the 13 weeks have expired. I assume the million people we are talking about are those people in places where there is not high unemployment, who do not qualify for an additional 13 weeks above the 13 weeks that have already been extended.

As you know, under this bill, as under the prior bill, in States where there are high rates of unemployment, people do get 26 weeks, the 13 plus 13. So what you are talking about is a million people, in places where there are lower rates of unemployment, not getting an additional 13 weeks on top of the 13 weeks they now get on top of the 26 weeks which the original unemployment act provided.

So when we talk about people being left out, what we are talking about is a change in what the original extension is. I am not too sure that is being left out. Those are people who went through their 26 weeks, went through their 13 weeks, and have still not been able to find a job but are not in States with high unemployment.

So what we are doing is extending last year's unemployment benefits to this year. I think that is a fair way to start. It is a way to get things done. If you want to change unemployment ex-

ension and turn it into 26 weeks, we can have that debate. But to suggest we are leaving people out, I am not too sure that is really what is factually happening in this situation.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in response to the question by the Senator from Rhode Island, it is clear we are not solving the problem today. Because of the reality of scheduling, and in part because of what happened in the last Congress, we are faced with the reality that if we do not act today, there are going to be as many as 750,000 people who will have a disruption in benefits as of Thursday. I believe the House is going out tomorrow.

We have a compromise on both sides of the aisle we have been working on that was agreed to—worked on by Senators CLINTON, FITZGERALD, NICKLES, SPECTER, CANTWELL, and a range of people.

I understand what we are doing today, if this is accepted by unanimous consent, is taking care of the 750,000 people who will be able to continue to receive their benefits. I know there is a lot more to do.

I am not sure it is necessary to go over everything that is in the bill. Basically, what the compromise does is extend unemployment benefits from December 28—which was while we were all out on vacation—up until June 1, 2003, which is an additional 5 months of coverage. That is what we would be agreeing to today, well recognizing there are other issues in addition to this that we are going to have to do as we go forward on this issue.

The compromise, I should also add, since some of the details were brought up, also provides coverage allowing benefits to be phased out rather than just shut off immediately when the program ends.

President Bush has made it very clear that the extension of unemployment benefits is a top priority. On both sides of the aisle, we have tried to come together. Given the circumstances of having been on our recent holiday, I would like to see us respond in a timely manner, meaning now, through the unanimous consent request, recognizing there is more work to do as we go forward.

The President, as we speak, or in the last hours, has addressed other parts of reemployment. At the end of the day, people want the checks, but what they really want are the jobs. There are other ways we will continue to address that in the future.

I urge my colleagues, very soon, to take the regular order—I will not call for it at this point—so we can take this first important step very significant to the American people, many of whom are not going to see their checks unless we act, and act today.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today in support of extending the tem-

porary extended unemployment compensation program.

In March of last year, Congress enacted the "Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002." This Act created a temporary program to provide additional unemployment benefits to workers in every State.

Specifically, this program provided up to 13 weeks of federally funded employment benefits for workers who become unemployed and exhaust their regular State unemployment benefits. In addition, the program provided up to 13 weeks of additional benefits in high unemployment States—that's a maximum of 26 weeks.

When this extended benefit program was originally enacted last year, it was scheduled to expire at the end of 2002.

Unfortunately, the economy has not performed as well as we all hoped and the unemployment rate in many States continued to rise throughout last year.

As my colleagues may recall, the Senate agreed to a unanimous consent request last year to extend the deadline. Unfortunately, the 107th Congress adjourned before reaching a final agreement on the extension.

So, we are here again today seeking unanimous consent to extend the temporary extended unemployment compensation program.

This agreement which has been co-sponsored by Senators FITZGERALD, SPECTER, COLLINS, GREGG, NICKLES, and CLINTON would provide a 5-month extension of the program through the end of May. This agreement has been reached in consultation with the House Leadership.

I believe a 5-month extension is an appropriate timeframe to see how the economy will perform this year, as well as give Congress the opportunity to consider further economic stimulus legislation.

Our goal should be make sure that everyone who wants a job gets a paycheck, instead of just an unemployment check.

I also believe it is important to point out that although the program expired last week, if we can get this measure through the House and onto the President's desk by Thursday, no one will miss a check.

Unemployment benefits are the bridges that help people get from one job to another. These benefits are not huge, but they're certainly better than nothing for those who are out of work and desperately looking for jobs. People have to put food on the table. They have to heat their homes. They have to buy their kids clothes, shoes and school supplies. Their needs are immediate, and they need immediate relief.

While Congress is approving unemployment benefits, we need to do everything in our power to create jobs. I don't mean just any jobs, but quality opportunities that pay enough income to sustain families and build careers. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the President on creating jobs. Americans are the world's greatest workforce. Folks need and deserve

to use their abilities and skills to the fullest.

According to the Department of Labor, more than 780,000 individuals were collecting extended benefits in mid-December. If we act now to extend this program, workers who qualified before December 28th will be able to continue receiving their weekly benefit check without interruption.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues today as cosponsor of the measure that will extend unemployment insurance benefits. We have a long bipartisan tradition of extending unemployment benefits during periods of prolonged joblessness. We have this policy because it is the right thing to do for people and for the economy. Before I present the case for why extended unemployment benefits are needed—a case which by now almost everyone agrees with—I want to remind my colleagues why we are at this point today.

Led by the late Senator Wellstone, several of my colleagues and I, began this discussion last September. At that point it appeared clear that this economy was still in a weak, 'jobless recovery.' Yet, the administration failed to understand the basic economic reality, and consequently refused to support an extension of benefits. During the next 2 months the economy remained weak and more jobs were lost. My colleagues and I returned to the Senate floor repeatedly, attempting to pass a reasonable extension of unemployment insurance benefits. We asked for unanimous consent eight times, each time pointing out the weak economy, the lack of job creation, the growing number of Americans who had exhausted their benefits, and the upcoming cliff that more Americans were facing, should Congress fail to act. All this while the President remained silent.

Finally, at the eleventh hour of the last Congress, on November 14, we came to an agreement within the Senate. And I would like to thank Senators CLINTON, CANTWELL and NICKLES for their leadership in reaching that compromise. That compromise was needed in order to prevent almost 1 million Americans who should have received benefits from having their benefits terminated. But even that compromise, which passed the Senate by unanimous consent, failed to elicit the support of the President. And without his urging the House failed to act.

Now finally, today we are passing this compromise again. Actually we are passing a slightly improved version which will last for five months, providing individuals with the opportunity to begin receiving extended benefits until June 1st, and allowing all of those who begin to receive their benefits to receive the full 13 weeks, in the event that they are unable to find a job. And it is my understanding that if the House acts on this tomorrow, and the President signs this measure by

Thursday, that everyone who should receive a benefit will continue to do so.

However, even with passage of this measure, there is still significant work that needs to be done. This legislation, despite the valiant efforts of some of my colleagues, fails to provide benefits to those who have already exhausted their benefits and are still unable to find a job. There are an estimated 1 million Americans who are in such a position. They are in such a position because the economy has continued to remain weak and is failing to create jobs.

The latest unemployment report showed unemployment at an 8 year high of six percent. We have 2.17 million fewer private sector jobs today than when President Bush took office. We lost 48,000 private sector jobs last month alone.

As a result of the lack of jobs, there are over 1.7 million Americans who have been unemployed and looking for work for more than 26 weeks. There are 150,000 more long-term unemployed than in September and over 1 million more than when President Bush took office. Over 20 percent of those who are unemployed have been so for more than 26 weeks, a greater percentage than at any point in the past eight years.

The premise of the unemployment insurance system is that you give people some short-term support, the labor market picks up, and they can go back and find a job. Today, they cannot find jobs. In fact, not only can they not find them, more people are losing their jobs. So the labor market is contracting, not expanding. Extending benefits in this situation is the proper economic policy. Fed Chairman Greenspan, before the Joint Economic Committee this past November stated: "I have always argued that in periods like that the economic restraints on the unemployment insurance system almost surely ought to be eased."

This easing ought to include extending benefits to those who have already exhausted all of their benefits. I can not understand why anyone is objecting to extending benefits to these individuals. It is not because we lack the resources to extend benefits. Extending benefits to these individuals is projected to cost around \$7.5 billion. Our unemployment insurance trust funds, specifically designed to meet this kind of situation, are in strong financial condition with approximately \$24 billion. Those moneys have been paid into the trust fund over a period of time. The whole system was structured to have these trust funds build up in good times, and then to utilize them in bad times.

We will spend much time debating the wisdom of various economic stimulus plans over the coming months, but one thing that everyone should be able to agree on is the stimulative effects of extending unemployment insurance benefits. As the Baltimore Sun wrote in an editorial on January 3, 2003, "Few dispute the clear returns from direct-

ing short-term relief to those who lose their jobs as a result of the fiscal turbulence. Giving money to people who need it to pay their bills ensures that it will be spent and multiply as it ripples through the economy."

In closing, I would like to thank all of those who have worked so hard to pass the measure that we passed today. As a result many Americans will receive the benefits that they deserve and our economy will receive some of the stimulus that it needs. And I will continue to work to extend benefits to the 1 million Americans who have exhausted their unemployment insurance coverage.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act. On December 28, 2002, the Federal Government played Scrooge to nearly 800,000 Americans. We left town, and we left a lot of people holding no money for the new year. Because the House of Representatives failed to pass an extension of unemployment benefits, 780,000 unemployed Americans—including 10,000 unemployed Marylanders—had their benefits abruptly cut off just a few days after Christmas.

Yet the story gets even worse. One million Americans have already exhausted both Federal and state aid without finding a new job, and 2 million are expected to run out of state benefits in the next five months. We must act now to help these working Americans who have been hardest hit by the economic downturn.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act. This bill will give immediate assistance to those who need it most and it will put money back into the economy to keep it going. The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act will help nearly 2.85 million Americans who are facing the highest unemployment rate since the recession during the first Bush Administration. It will restore benefits for those who were unfairly cut off in December and it will help those who will lose their benefits in the next five months. It will provide relief for approximately 30,000 people in my own state of Maryland who still have not been able to find a job.

Extending UI not only helps those who are hardest hit by bad economic times, it also helps turn the economy around. A good economic stimulus puts money in the hands of the people who will spend it. That is precisely what the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act does. Workers who have lost their jobs because of September 11th or the economic downturn will spend this money. They will spend it on necessities, like rent and food, to keep the economy going. This bill will inject \$7.25 billion into the economy as an immediate stimulus. I believe this will do more to help the people and stimulate the economy than the across the board tax cuts for the wealthy.

I am so pleased that the Senate is ready to pass this bill. But this measure doesn't go far enough. As long term unemployment balloons due to the weak economy, we can't forget about the 1 million Americans who have already exhausted both Federal and state unemployment benefits and have still not found a job. These people have no income, and now they have no safety net. I urge my colleagues to provide an additional 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits for these Americans.

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I rise today to urge the Senate to pass the extension of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation, TEUC, Program.

In November, the Senate acted unanimously to extend the TEUC program through the end of March by passing a bill that I cosponsored along with Senators CLINTON, CANTWELL, SPECTER, SARBANES, KENNEDY, and DURBIN. However, the House and Senate were unable to reach a compromise that would have allowed President Bush to sign the extension into law. This is our last chance to act before there is an interruption in the receipt of benefits pursuant to the TEUC program.

November 2002, the nationwide unemployment level shot up to 6.0 percent from 5.7 percent in October. The law authorizing the TEUC program expired on December 28, 2002. If we do not act now to extend this program, as many as 800,000 workers who are receiving temporary benefits will not receive their full 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits. 1.6 million workers will exhaust their regular unemployment benefits between December 28, 2002 and the end of May 2003 if we fail to act. If we act today to extend this important program, we will ensure that these workers will receive their next unemployment check.

The unemployment situation in my home State of Illinois is critical. It would be particularly adversely affected if we do not act. In November 2002, Illinois had a 6.7-percent unemployment rate, tying Mississippi with the third highest unemployment rate in the country behind Alaska and Oregon. Illinois' rate was substantially higher than the nationwide 6.0-percent unemployment rate. Over the 3-month period from September through November 2002, the average unemployment rate in Illinois was 6.6 percent, which is significantly higher than the national average of 5.8 percent over the same period. In November, there were 416,200 unemployed persons in Illinois.

I have introduced legislation that would extend the provisions of the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002 to allow individuals receiving benefits to continue collecting them until they expire in full. This bill is retroactive, and permits people who otherwise would have had their TEUC benefits cut off on December 28 to receive the full 13 weeks of TEUC benefits. Furthermore, this

legislation would make individuals who have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of unemployment insurance eligible for a 13-week extension, and would allow these individuals to apply for such extensions through the end of May. Under my bill, even those who enrolled in the TEUC program just prior to the expiration of the program would be eligible to receive full 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits.

This bill is a more generous extension of the TEUC program than the extension that the Senate approved last November. It provides for 5-month extension of the temporary unemployment insurance program, which is more than the 3 months of benefits provided by the extension that the Senate passed last year. Passing this legislation will help millions of families nationwide, easing the burden that these families might otherwise experience if their unemployment insurance were to have expired on December 28, 2002. It will help unemployed Americans feed their families and pay their bills while giving them an additional 5 months to find new jobs.

I would like to thank the Senators on both sides of the aisle who have helped to negotiate this bipartisan compromise bill that will extend unemployment insurance benefits to the millions of Americans who need them.

President Bush has called upon us to quickly pass legislation that will extend the TEUC program, a program whose benefits fell off a cliff on December 28, 2002. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to support this necessary legislation. I also urge the House of Representatives to take up and pass this bill in an expeditious manner so that President Bush can sign the measure into law by this Thursday and prevent any interruption in the receipt of temporary unemployment insurance benefits.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I fully appreciate the suggestion made by the distinguished Republican leader, the majority leader. Clearly, we have to resolve what we can resolve. I know a good deal of effort has been put forth in getting us to this point. But that does not acknowledge the urgency with which we have to address all of those people who are not considered in this resolution.

The Senator mentioned the fact that our Republican colleagues in the House have chosen to recess tomorrow. You do not have the luxury of recessing if you are unemployed. You do not have the luxury of recessing if there is no other option for you but to seek unemployment compensation.

I hope, as Senator REID has suggested, that we continue to find a way this afternoon to address this second group of people who need help, this 750,000 to 1 million people who are not covered in this resolution. I think he is

right. I don't think we ought to leave until we get the job done this afternoon. There is no reason why we can't complete our work on both groups today, and I urge my colleagues to stay until we get the job done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I yield to my friend and colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. I yield to my friend from Oklahoma.

Go ahead.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, we have to talk about what is doable. If people want to revisit what we did last year, I am happy to do that. We passed temporary Federal unemployment compensation extension last March or April. We passed that. It was a benefit. It passed overwhelmingly in the Congress. It expired on December 28. Several people said we need to extend that. Last year some people wanted to double the program from a 13-week Federal program to 26 weeks. This Senator, along with others, objected to that. The cost of that program or expansion was about \$17- or \$18 billion. I objected to it several times. I will object to it today.

What I did agree to and what this Senate passed last year was a simple extension of present law. We agreed, Senator CLINTON and myself, Senator FITZGERALD, Senator SPECTER, Senator CANTWELL—by unanimous vote, the Senate agreed to a 3-month extension of the present program. That passed the Senate. It did not pass the House. The cost of that program was about \$4.9 billion. The House had passed a program that cost a little less than \$1 billion. I tried to work out the differences between the House and the Senate late in the legislative session. I was not successful. Some of us have been working, frankly, for some period of time trying to get something done now.

We have a letter from the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao. I ask unanimous consent to print this letter in the RECORD.

SECRETARY OF LABOR,

Washington, DC, January 6, 2002.

Hon. BILL FRIST,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Capitol Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR FRIST: Although the economy is showing some positive signs, we believe that a short extension of Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation (TEUC) benefits is needed to give many unemployed workers continued access to the necessities of life while they look for new jobs. As the 108th Congress convenes, we urge you to quickly pass an extension of the TEUC program retroactive to December 28, 2002. The only way for states to continue paying TEUC benefits without disruption is if a bill is presented to the President for signature no later than Thursday, January 9, 2003.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have a member of your staff contact Mr. Anthony Bedell, Senior Legislative

Officer, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, who will coordinate a departmental response. Mr. Bedell can be reached at (202) 693-4600.

Sincerely,

ELAINE L. CHAO.

Mr. NICKLES. The essence of the letter says the only way for States to continue paying temporary unemployment compensation benefits without disruption is if a bill is presented to the President for signature no later than Thursday, January 9, the day after tomorrow.

We had to resolve the differences between the House and the Senate. The Senate passed a \$4.9 billion bill; the House passed a \$1 billion bill. We have worked with our colleagues in the House. I think we have been successful. I believe we have been successful in getting them to accept a straight extension of present law.

We were originally talking 3 months. After negotiations with the House, I consulted with my colleague and friend from New York and said, let's make it a 5-month extension. So we extended the program all the way through May, and then the phaseout would occur. So there would not be a shutoff date as there was December 28, a much better transition. It was my understanding that colleagues had agreed upon this 5-month extension. The cost of this proposal is estimated to be \$7.2, \$7.3 billion on a 2002 scoring base. It might go up if benefits go up on the calendar year. It might even be a little bit more than that.

That is a significant change that I believe we have the House concurring with to pass. We will not pass and they will not concur with a doubling of the program to 26 weeks. I will not agree with it, and I don't believe my House colleagues will, either.

If we are going to provide unemployment compensation extension benefits so it would be a seamless transition, so those people who are presently receiving Federal temporary unemployment compensation, if they are in this 13-week window, one week or 10, that they could continue to receive benefits without missing a week, we need to pass it. We need to pass it today. It needs to go to the House, and it needs to go to the President by Thursday for his signature. The only way that will happen will be by unanimous consent.

I believe the only bill that will pass will be basically a clean extension of present law, and I believe the proposal we have before us is deserving of all of our support, just as the bill we passed last November, maybe October, we passed by unanimous consent a 3-month extension, this is a unanimous consent extension for 5 months with a phaseout.

I urge my colleagues not to object to the majority leader's unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Let me just see if we can resolve this issue. We have two

questions. One is the substantive question about who ought to be included in the unemployment compensation package. We believe all of those who ought to benefit ought to be provided the coverage in this resolution. Our Republican colleagues say that half of those ought to benefit. The other question is whether we ought to be able to have a procedural vote, whether we ought to have an opportunity to vote on the amendment offered by the distinguished Senator from New York.

I again ask consent that we have the one vote on the amendment offered by the Senator from New York and then obviously whatever the Senate may decide on that amendment would give us an opportunity to come to closure on the resolution itself.

I see no reason why the Senate should be denied that opportunity on an issue this important on the very first day of the session. I ask unanimous consent that that amendment be allowed a vote at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I respond to the comments by the Senator from South Dakota by saying the Senator from Oklahoma laid out clearly why a vote and adoption of such an amendment would be devastating. It would be devastating for the million people we want to cover with the unanimous consent request we have proposed. The House will not accept it. I am not too sure, even if we did pass it here and send it over to the House, the House would not accept it. We will be in conference and the opportunity for us to pass an unemployment extension by Thursday will be lost. I think it is important for us to pass a bill which, I remind everybody in the Chamber, passed when the Senator from South Dakota was the majority leader and the Senator from Montana was the head of the Finance Committee. They passed this unemployment extension.

All we are saying is, let's continue the unemployment extension that you proposed and you passed in the last session of Congress. All of a sudden your handiwork is no longer sufficient today. I don't know what happened between what you did then and what we did today. I don't know what possibly changed the dynamic that would now cause what we are proposing to be insufficient, when what you did was sufficient.

The fact is, this is exactly what you passed under your leadership and what we should do today. We should stop playing politics out of the box with this very important issue to over 1 million people in this country and get the job done.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the Senator from Pennsylvania has made a number of errors in his comment. Let me clarify. We passed the resolution

that we passed in the last session of Congress over the objections of many of those on our side, all of those on our side who felt this very amendment should have been included then. We were told back then we would revisit this issue immediately upon coming back.

Well, we are doing that. But we had a clear understanding that there would be an occasion for us to have a debate and have the amendment we have suggested by the Senator from New York. That is No. 1.

No. 2, I hope this body will never be dictated to by the House of Representatives. We are the Senate of the United States. As the Senate of the United States, I don't want the House telling us what to do. We ought to do what is right. We ought to be the ones to dictate what our position is, not the House.

I would hope we could accommodate the need to address this resolution and the need to address the resolution offered by the Senator from New York. I will suggest a new approach. I would ask unanimous consent that we send two resolutions to the House, the resolution before us and the resolution offered by the Senator from New York. I make that request at this time.

Mr. NICKLES. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, what is the present business? Is the request by the Senator from Tennessee the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The original unanimous consent request of the majority leader is before the body.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have a couple of points. One, the Senator from Pennsylvania says, "what's changed?" A lot has changed. The unemployment rate is higher than it was last March. That is a significant change. Second, the nature of unemployment in America regrettably is becoming more long term. Economists debate why that is happening; nevertheless, it is a fact. It is becoming more long term. Some of it is Rust Belt jobs not being replaced. A lot of it is in the service industries, whether in technology and financial; but it is becoming more long term.

These people are having a hard time with the change in the nature of our economy and finding jobs. I think, frankly, the request by the Senator from New York is more than reasonable, that at least we should have an opportunity to vote on that; or we can take up the suggestion by the Senator from South Dakota, that we have two different options.

I might also add that this is stimulative. The Senator from Washington pointed out, quite correctly, that economists say for every dollar spent on unemployment, \$2.15 is recirculated into the economy. Essentially, a lot of the discussion at the beginning of this year is stimulus—how are we going to

stimulate the economy? I think that at least helping people who don't have jobs gain a little bit of benefits is a good idea because it stimulates the economy. I further add that there will be a lot of discussion over the next weeks and months about the President's stimulus plan, which includes tremendous tax breaks, whether it is dividends or income-tax breaks for these people who have jobs and income.

What about the people who don't have jobs, the people who don't have income? If we are going to "stimulate" the economy by giving tax breaks, the very least we can do is help people who are unemployed in an economy whose very nature means there is longer unemployment.

People who do not have income don't pay income tax. I suggest that we find a way to have a vote on the amendment of the Senator from New York. Senators can vote against it. If Senators do not want to be "dictated" to by the House, they can vote their conscience and do what they think is right. If Senators believe the House trumps this body, they can vote against the amendment. They have that option. But at the very least, I believe that we, as responsible Senators—I heard a couple of great speeches not long ago about defending the Constitution of the United States and doing what is right. Clearly, doing what is right is helping people who need some help. That is what is right. That is why we are here.

I understand it is a little inconvenient, and I don't denigrate that because of the receptions and the parties that are going on here. I don't think the Constitution had that in mind when the Framers wrote the provisions in that document, the oath of office which we took to support and defend our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I hope the leaders will provide some time for debate. The majority leader has made a unanimous consent request. Senators are reserving the right to object. They have no right to yield to other Senators when they are reserving the right to object. Let's have an orderly procedure here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. SCHUMER. I will reserve the right to object.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object, and I will not object. I think there is a lot of good debate points being raised. But I hope we don't start this session the way we ended much of last year, which was getting in great debates about big topics and at the end of the day not passing anything. I think that is really where we ended, and we fouled up on a lot of bills last year—big bills. There

were significant bills that we would work for weeks and months on and we didn't get them done.

We have a chance to do something here. I think everybody is agreed that there is more that could be done. That would be good, but we don't have that agreement. We can start this session off with doing something or nothing. I hope at some point in time we can get to the point of doing something.

We have a reasonable proposal that is agreed to by the basic principles in this proposal at least. Let's pass that. Let's start this session off with getting something that is going to be helpful for people. It may not be perfect for everybody, and that is obvious, but we can get something done here. It will be significant and it will be important and helpful. I hope we can move that forward and get this cleared through.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in my unanimous consent request, I wanted to close what has become some debate here and basically say that we have an opportunity—and I believe an obligation—to finish up the business that we didn't finish in the last Congress, on which we have an opportunity to take the next very important step, which will affect the lives of 750,000 people after next Thursday, which doesn't have anything to do with the House or the Senate. Thursday is the deadline for these checks. If they don't go out, it affects 750,000 people. The 5 months' extension that is being proposed here also affects the lives of about 2½ million other people who will be enrolling over that period. Because we worked so hard on both sides of the aisle over so many months and weeks—and over the last several days—I didn't recognize that we would get to a point now where we would have so many reservations of the right to object. We are talking about Thursday, checks not going out, a dislocation affecting 750,000 people, an additional 2½ million, if we don't address this today. With that, I will call for the regular order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The regular order has been called for. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. I object.

Mr. BYRD. What is the regular order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The regular order is a unanimous consent request made by the majority leader. The Senator can object.

Mr. BYRD. Parliamentary inquiry: Is the resolution before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The request is to have the measure sent to the desk and passed.

Mr. BYRD. Then the resolution is not before the Senate. There is nothing before the Senate that can be amended at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct. A request has been made that it be granted so it can be brought for a vote.

Mr. BYRD. The request is an all-encompassing request. It doesn't give the

Senate a chance to amend the resolution? That is what I am trying to find out.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is correct.

The majority leader has asked for regular order. Senators may not reserve the right to object when the regular order has been called for. They either must object or permit the request to be granted. Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, may I make a further unanimous consent request?

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, do I have the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader has the floor.

Mr. BYRD. He made a request, but he sent something to the desk, didn't he?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader has made a unanimous consent request and he retains the floor.

Mr. BYRD. Yes, he does. I understand that. I had hoped to suggest the absence of a quorum, but he does retain the floor. I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object, I ask to speak for a minute following the Senator—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair believes that objection is heard. Is there objection to the majority leader's request?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The majority leader has the floor.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I am obviously disappointed with this objection for the reasons that I have set out. There are 750,000 people and their dependents who depend on these distributions, as well as another 2½ million people. We had been told this had been cleared on both sides after a lot of hard work. I am obviously disappointed, because this is the first move out for me, after it had been cleared on both sides, but I guess that is what I can come to expect. I do hope that my colleagues will rethink today's objection and allow us, for the reasons I have said, to have this cleared later today.

Mr. DASCHLE addressed the Chair.

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

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

Mr. FRIST. I renew my original request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object—and I will not object the objection I raised earlier within the caucus has been discussed at length and it is

clear to me that the Democratic leadership, Senator DASCHLE through the membership, will continue to fight for the million people who are not covered by this resolution, but we cannot turn our backs on the 2.8 million who need this check on Thursday.

I will not object to this unanimous consent request.

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

The bill (S. 23) was read the third time and passed.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. I ask the period of morning business be extended for 3 hours under the earlier parameters.

Mr. DASCHLE. I ask unanimous consent the 3 hours be divided equally.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic leader.

UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, let me thank the distinguished Senator from Illinois for not objecting to this resolution. He and my colleagues feel very strongly, as is evidenced by the debate this afternoon. We will not give up, we will not relent, we will not allow those million Americans who have no coverage not getting the consideration they deserve in the Senate. We will continue to offer amendments.

I put my colleagues on notice: On this legislation and on any other occasion that we have the opportunity to avail ourselves of an amendment, we will do so, because this deserves a vote. It deserves debate. It deserves passage. It is shameful we are leaving out these million people today. There is absolutely no excuse, especially when the President of the United States today is in Chicago talking about more tax cuts for those at the very top. That is wrong.

It is an illustration of the extraordinary difference in philosophy about how we stimulate the economy. This is not only good for the economy, it is good for 1 million people left out as a result of the actions today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. On the Democratic side we have a number of Senators who have asked for a specific time. I ask unanimous consent on our side, and on an alternating basis if, in fact, there are Republicans who wish to speak, that Senator BOXER first be recognized for 5 minutes, Senator SCHUMER for 5 minutes, Senator STABENOW for 5 minutes, Senator DORGAN for 5 minutes, Senator REID of Rhode Island for 5 minutes, Senator MURRAY for 5 minutes. That is a total, I believe, of 35 minutes, leaving 55 minutes for other Senators on this side of the aisle who wish to speak. The normal procedure is to alternate back

and forth on the time evenly divided between now and 5 p.m.

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

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank my assistant Democratic leader for the time.

During the brief debate we had before we voted to extend these unemployment benefits, the Senator from Pennsylvania asked, What is wrong with you people? What has changed, that you really want to protect now these 1 million people, when several months ago you did not speak as loudly for their inclusion?

I state for the record what has happened in this period of time. As we go out and about our States, as I think we all did during this break, we find high anxiety among the people—high anxiety because of this economy. We are seeing more foreclosures than ever. Two million jobs have been lost in the private sector. On top of that we are seeing budget deficits that we have not seen in many years.

My friend who is now presiding, my esteemed colleague, understands this anxiety. We have teamed up to work on giving a jump-start to the high-tech sector with a bill on wireless fidelity, which I believe is going to really help this economy. He understands that.

We have a sense of urgency about that bill because we know we can turn things around. In my State we have a horrible situation in the northern areas because of what I would call a depression, really, in the high-tech sector. Some of it was to be expected; we went through this huge period of growth. We have some settling down there. But nonetheless, it is a problem. We have thousands of people in northern California who are suffering through no fault of their own. These people, who are intelligent, educated, and excellent workers, are out on the street. They are running out of benefits, and some of them have run out already. That is why we on this side of the aisle believe those million people should not be left out of the equation.

I have a State of 35 million people. In terms of its economy, it would be the sixth largest economy in the world. The fact is, the good people in that State need help. Why we on this side of the aisle were so upset and why we kept objecting or reserving the right to object is we wanted to make sure the people's voices were heard. That is what the Senate ought to be, a place where the voice of the people is heard.

We have a situation where our States are worse off. They cannot come in and help because they are financially strapped because of the recession. So people are turning to us. Today we took care of some people. I am very proud we did that, but we have left out in the cold a million people. I will not be satisfied, speaking as one Senator, until we have taken care of all those who are in need.

The Senator from Pennsylvania also made a comment that just some of the

States have problems. This is not true. These million people reside in all of the States. In my own State, the pockets of real trouble are in the north of the State right now; the south of the State is doing better. But individuals all over this country need help.

In summary, I say the Democrats are back. We are ready to go to work. We will stay. We will stay late into the night. But we are going to offer, all through this day and all through the coming days, a unanimous consent request saying we need to take care of those million people, those long-term unemployed people whose checks have already run out, who do not know where they are going to get the money to pay the rent, who don't know if they will get evicted, who don't know if they can take care of their children.

There is a new term of art that has come about. It is called "food insecurity." Food insecurity—that is a delicate way of saying people are hungry.

We are seeing food insecurity. We are seeing housing insecurity. We are seeing joblessness. Can we turn it around? Of course we could turn it around.

I have seen the President's plan. In my personal opinion, having looked at where the benefits go, it is a bonanza to the wealthiest in the country, and it is a bust for the middle class. It is a budget deficit disaster. But he has a plan out there. It is a huge plan, and we are going to work to make it better, to get the benefits to those who need them. But if you want to talk about stimulus, talk about the million people who have no money to put bread on the table.

In closing, let's help those million people. I intend to stay here all this week and next and into future weeks to make sure we do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I have been here throughout this debate. I have not been involved in this issue prior to this point, as many have. But it has been an interesting and rather surprising sequence of events here on this first day, this sort of ceremonial day, in which we get into this kind of head-to-head arrangement. It is surprising.

I do understand why this issue was brought to the floor. That is because there is a time element. We heard a letter from the Secretary of Labor indicating that in order to get a continuation of the unemployment benefits of those who are still eligible, we have to do it by Thursday. So I think that is a pretty compelling issue. In order to get that done, we obviously also have to do something that has been agreed to, apparently, by the House as well.

So it is surprising to me that we have this effort made within the Senate, and also with House leadership, to try to do something within this time that is imperative we do, yet we come to the floor and apparently the very people who helped make the agreement now