

## ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on our side, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, be recognized for 5 minutes, followed by the Senator from Rhode Island for 6 minutes.

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

The Senator from California.

## ECONOMIC REALITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, we have heard all these glowing figures from the other side of the aisle about this economy. I want to give a little dose of reality.

Today the unemployment insurance extension runs out. This Senate refused to act. I don't know how many times Senator CANTWELL has made that unanimous consent request.

In my State, it is estimated if unemployment benefits are not extended, 314,344 workers will lose benefits in the first 6 months of the year. This is outrageous.

This is the first time I can ever remember where a political party in charge could care less about people who are unemployed. Look at the record here. This is real. Let's go back to the Hoover administration, when there was a decrease in job creation. During every other administration—Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton—private sector employment increased.

Not now. Here we are at a moment when people are running out of their unemployment extension. I will read you a letter written by Kathleen Fontana of Scotts Valley, CA:

DEAR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: I am a single parent of two teenage boys and unemployed and unable to apply for the extension of UI. I was laid off July 2, 2004 . . . after 38 years with TWA. Needless to say, I am 60 years old, having been forced to live off my home equity loan in order to make ends meet. The unemployment extension needs to be passed and reinstated for us American citizens that are having these financial difficulties in the career area. More jobs are leaving the U.S. and more money is leaving here, too. Iraq is only one example. Things need to change and people at home need help too. . . . We need your votes to change this and have the extension of UI benefits.

As I go around my State—and I have been doing that a lot—the basic theme I am hearing is this: Senator, it is time for this country; it is time for America; it is time to think about our people and our workers.

I could not even believe it. I went into farm country and the rice farmers there who are sending their sons and daughters off to war—the contracts for rice are for the people of Iraq; they went out of the country. This is taxpayer dollars, American taxpayer dollars. Instead of saying, OK, we are going to rebuild Iraq and do it with American business and farmers, oh, no, we could not do that. Our State Department would not like that.

I am here to tell you there is something brewing in the countryside. People are angry about the fact that they seem to be last in line.

Let's look at some of these job loss numbers since this President came into power. Under Ronald Reagan, we had 165,000 jobs created per month. That was terrific. He was a beloved President. Under George H.W. Bush, 47,604 jobs were created a month. That was not very good. Under Bill Clinton, there was an extraordinary leap, to 236,625 jobs created per month. That is why kids got lifted out of poverty.

I saw a chart Senator SANTORUM had and it is beautiful. It shows how the African-American children are seeing poverty decline—up until last year. It is because during the Clinton administration we did welfare reform and we had a great economy. Then under George W. Bush, 58,815 jobs have been lost per month. It is a pathetic situation. If you translate that to my State, what we see in this situation is, again what has happened here and why we have to at least, A, be compassionate to the people who need extended unemployment benefits; B, we need to raise the minimum wage; C, we need to kill this administration's crazy idea to take overtime away from hard-working people.

Let's get this country back on track. It should be time for America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

## THE COURSE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss my concerns about the course of our military operations in Iraq.

I returned about 10 days ago from a trip to Iraq with my colleagues. After a brilliant offensive campaign to destroy the Iraqi military forces, we have settled into a very dismal and dangerous occupation. In the last few hours, five more American military personnel were killed by an improvised explosion device. There were four more civilians who were killed. Iraqi security forces have died in much higher numbers.

The administration has not responded appropriately to the military demand within Iraq today. One of the leading points that illustrates this, I think, irresponsible approach to Iraq is the failure to budget properly to fund this effort. The operation in Iraq costs approximately \$4 billion a month. Yet in the 2005 budget that was submitted by the administration, there is no money for operations in Afghanistan or Iraq. They are still working off the supplemental that was passed last year. But the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps testified they are seriously concerned that on October 1 they will begin to run out of money. They are already being forced to reprogram funds,

to rob Peter to pay Paul in order to continue this operation.

Having committed ourselves to Iraq, we must prevail, and to prevail, we must fund all of the requirements for our military. We must do it adequately and promptly, and the administration is doing neither. We have a requirement for many pieces of equipment. But probably emblematic of the difficulties of this operation, the two most pressing items of equipment are body armor and armored vehicles, principally uparmored Humvees. When we went into this operation, we did not understand the consequences of the occupation, the threats to our troops, the political rivalries in Iraq, the ethnic and sectarian divisions of the country.

As a result, we found ourselves with troops in the field without proper equipment. Many lacked body armor, the kind of sophisticated armor with ceramic insert plates that provide a margin of safety for our troops. The Army and Department of Defense claimed they fixed it. But as late as March 26, reports in the San Diego Union, Boston Globe, and USA Today stated soldiers in Iraq are calling home and asking their families to buy them body armor and send it to them, or they are buying it before they deploy. That is unacceptable. That is one example.

With respect to uparmored Humvees, last July I got off of the aircraft in Baghdad and approached the military policemen from the 118th Military Police Battalion from Rhode Island. The first request I had was: Get us uparmored Humvees. We are driving through these dangerous cities and we need that protection.

We have not reached the number of uparmored Humvees we need for critical troops in Iraq. This might be accomplished by November of this year, but it is a long time from the need of over a year ago and finally filling the requirement.

We also have to armor other Humvees, and armor kits have been provided to do this armoring. Again, the administration's budget is not sufficient. The Secretary of the Army said: We are going to get all this equipment done. We are going to run the production line at top speed.

Yet the money is not there in the budget. We have to do more.

Last September, Senator HAGEL and I offered an amendment to the supplemental to increase the size of the Army by 10,000 troops. This was vehemently objected to by the Secretary of Defense, but I think they eventually got the message. A few months ago, the Department of the Army announced they were going to increase the size by 30,000 troops. But they are not going to ask for the money in the budgetary process. They are once again going back to the supplemental—to take money from the supplemental, which already is strapped to pay for operations. As a result, we will have, I hope, additional forces in the military,