

RECOGNITION OF THE
REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

SENATE GOALS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, first, I would like to congratulate President-elect Obama on his victory. It is a rare honor for the Senate to send one of its own to the White House. In fact, I think it has only happened two other times, Warren G. Harding and John F. Kennedy, who went directly from the Senate to the White House. Regardless of party, every one of us, I am sure, feels a certain institutional pride in the event.

I called the new President shortly after his victory to offer my congratulations, and he was gracious in congratulating me on my own victory when he returned the call. As it happened, when he returned the call, I was grocery shopping in the local Kroger and enjoying the people passing by saying "Congratulations."

There I was in front of the cereal talking to the new President on my cell phone. What I told him was we would all be here to work with him once he takes office. I think both of us are eager to confront the challenges ahead. I told him he can expect cooperation on the confirmation of qualified nominees to key Cabinet posts. Faced with two wars overseas and a complex financial crisis at home, the American people should not have to worry about a power vacuum at places such as the Pentagon, the State Department, Treasury or the Department of Homeland Security.

Now, history offers a fairly clear path to success or failure for new Presidents. It is there for every new President who comes in to observe. The path I have discussed with the President-elect is one that can lead to success. As I see it, we face a simple choice: We can either work together to confront the big issues, the big issues of the day that neither party is willing to tackle on its own or the majority can instead focus on narrow partisan issues that appeal to a tiny sliver of the populace but which lack the support of the American mainstream.

In my view, the choice is rather simple, but the work that follows will not be. So I hope President-elect Obama will go after the big things and go after them early. If he does, our chances of achieving a positive result for the American people will be greatly increased.

We can start with some of the things President-elect Obama spoke about on the campaign trail, such as cutting spending, paying down the national debt, providing speedy tax relief, committing to a long-term strategy for energy independence, and reining in our out-of-control entitlement spending that threatens to consume 70 percent

of the Federal budget in 9 years. Let me say that again: Our out-of-control entitlement spending will consume 70 percent of the Federal budget in 9 years.

These are the challenges on which Senator Obama campaigned. They also happen to be issues upon which Republicans and Democrats should be able to reach some agreement. The American people are looking to us to resolve these issues, and Senate Republicans are eager to get that work done.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me say through the Chair to my distinguished counterpart, congratulations on your victory. As George Will, the esteemed columnist, wrote over the weekend, he compared your victory to Henry Clay, and I know the Senator is from the State of Kentucky. So I congratulate you on years of hard work.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I thank my friend, the majority leader.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk the will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OHIO'S VETERANS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, Ohio is home to more than 1 million veterans, dedicated men and women who have served in every branch of our Nation's Armed Forces and every major conflict in the modern era. They have served to keep our freedoms, so our Nation could remain secure. Ohioans have a long-standing tradition of service to our country. Ohio's veterans include Presidents and generals, from Grant to Sherman, and pioneers of American advancement, such as Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and James Lovell.

But for every well-known American veteran, there are, of course, many more heroes who have quietly served this Nation and my State of Ohio with honor and distinction.

As our Nation looks forward to the return of our loved ones from the bat-

tlefield, all of us remember the tremendous contributions our veterans have made to Ohio and to our country. We are humbled by their patriotism and their bravery.

On Veterans Day and every day, it is my honor to thank Ohio veterans and their families for their service to our great State and our great Nation.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame was created in 1992 to recognize the lifetime contributions of veterans, not just those who serve their country in the Armed Forces but also those who continue to give back since they left the service. I honor, congratulate, and salute all of them.

The Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2008 is made up of several men and women whose stories I would like to briefly tell.

Samuel Arnold, from Butler County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Vietnam war. Arnold is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4369 board of trustees and provides dentistry to veterans who reside at Joseph House at little or no cost.

Paul Baldrige, Jr., from Franklin County, is a U.S. Navy veteran. Baldrige has served in a number of veterans organizations, including the Navy League of the United States, where he has held positions as State president, national director, and vice president.

Oscar Decker, Jr., from Union County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Army National Guard and Army Reserve in World War II and Vietnam. Decker organized the Union County Military Family Support Group in 2003 and was awarded the Legion of Honor Award from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains and the American Legion of Merit.

Rebecca Eden, a registered nurse from Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Army Nurse Corps veteran, World War II. Eden is a lifetime member of Gold Star Wives and AMVETS. She was presented with the Veterans Affairs Commendation given by the Ohio Veterans Commission for helping veterans pursue educational goals in 1982.

Eugene Fitzthum, from Erie County, is a U.S. Army veteran, World War II. Fitzthum was presented the John L. Smith AMVET of the Year Award for all his volunteer work for AMVETS Post 17 in 2008 and Volunteer of the Year from the Ohio Veterans Home in 2006.

Nada Fleming, a registered nurse from Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Navy veteran, Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Fleming is a past commander of Seven Hills VFW Post 7609 and was appointed as National VFW Nurse of the Year for 2006-2007.

Robert Haas, from Stark County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Korean war. Haas served as the volunteer liaison officer for the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, for the past 29 years. He is a founding member and past president of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association No. 69.

Dale Huffman, from Montgomery County, is a U.S. Army veteran. His public broadcasting skills have helped to energize veteran advocacy, and he was inducted into Dayton's Walk of Fame on September 25, 2008.

Charles Ianni, deceased, was from Cuyahoga County, U.S. Army veteran, World War II. Ianni was named Veteran of the Year by Cuyahoga County and was a charter member of the John Towle Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, Special Forces Chapter.

James Johnson, from Franklin County, is a U.S. Air Force veteran. Johnson was awarded the AFCRC Certificate of Recognition for his contribution, support, and distinguished service to his community, especially in the area of veterans affairs in 2007.

Jack M. Kennedy, from Franklin County, is a U.S. Navy veteran, Vietnam war. Kennedy has served in the Navy League of the United States, where he has held various positions, including Navy League council president. He is a lifetime member of the Military Officers Association of America.

Margaret Kruckemeyer, a nurse, from Green County, is a U.S. Army veteran. Kruckemeyer is the president of the American Veterans Heritage Commission and is past national board member on the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs Foundation.

Samuel Lanza, from Trumbull County, is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, World War II. Lanza was appointed to the Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission in 1997. He is a past State commander for the Disabled American Veterans.

Gregory Lashutka, from Franklin County, is a U.S. Navy veteran. Lashutka is the former mayor of the city of Columbus and was selected as Municipal Leader of the Year in 1993. He has maintained continuous membership in the Columbus Chapter of the Navy League and has provided support, counsel, and advice to individual veterans and veterans groups.

Erwin Morse, from Clark County, is a U.S. Air Force veteran. Morse retired from the U.S. Air Force and went to work at the Dayton Veterans Administration Medical Center. He is the founder of the Honor Flight Network which raises funds and collaborates with a number of organizations to provide an opportunity for our Nation's World War II and terminally ill veterans from around the country to experience the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC.

Stanley Pace, from Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Air Force veteran, World War II. Pace has been active in the Boy Scouts of America since 1958 and was awarded the Silver Beaver and the Silver Antelope for his service. He is also active in the United Way of Cleveland and served as chairman of the annual United Way fund drive.

Elva Pounders, from Summit County, is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Vietnam war. Pounder is vice chairman for

the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and was awarded the 500 Hour Award for her extraordinary volunteer efforts at Brecksville VA Medical Center in 2006.

Tony Sustarsic, Cuyahoga County, is a U.S. Army veteran, World War II. Sustarsic is the founder, past president, and lifetime member of Euclid Veterans Club. He is also a fundraiser for the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1056 and American Legion Post 343.

William Willoughby, Jr., from Lake County, is a U.S. Army veteran, Vietnam war. Willoughby is a U.S. Military Academy admissions coordinator and serves on the Veterans Issues Committee. He was very helpful to me in selecting young men and women for West Point, for the U.S. Military Academy, when I was a Member of the House of Representatives.

Herman Zerger, a long-time friend of mine, is from Monroe County, U.S. Army veteran, with service in World War II and a prisoner of war. Zerger was one of the founding charter members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5303. He is an active participant in Ohio No. 1, American Ex-Prisoner of War.

As a Member of the Senate Veterans Committee, on which I serve with the Presiding Officer from Montana, my colleague, Senator TESTER, it has been my privilege to hear from Ohio veterans across the State about what matters most to them. Those discussions with veterans at roundtables and hearings in Ohio reinforce my profound respect for our veterans.

It is our duty as Members of Congress to do all we can to provide the services they have earned and deserved. I look forward to working with veterans and their families in the coming years to ensure that Ohio veterans' voices are heard in Washington.

We made major progress last year. Senator TESTER, Senator WEBB, Senator SANDERS—many of us on the Veterans Affairs Committee—Senator MURRAY and others, and, of course, Chairman AKAKA, made major gains in health and education benefits for veterans with the new GI bill—the most important benefits granted, the largest amount of benefits granted since the original GI bill several decades ago. I am appreciative of the work of my colleagues on that issue.

EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, when I think about the debate over extending unemployment insurance, some questions come to mind.

Does anyone in Congress want more American families to lose their homes?

Does anyone in Congress want more American children to go to bed hungry?

Does anyone in the House or Senate want more American families to stop paying their heating bills, to delay their credit card payments, to skip out on their health care bills?

Does anybody in the House or Senate want consumer spending to slow even further, dragging our economy from recession to something even worse?

Assuming the answer to any of these questions is no, then voting to extend unemployment insurance for current job seekers should not be a fight, it should be a formality.

This Chamber approved a massive bailout of the financial industry, not because investment bankers might have to forsake that second or third Mercedes, not because Wall Street bonuses might drop from eight figures to seven figures. We approved that bailout because when credit markets freeze, businesses cannot get working capital, and when businesses cannot get working capital, Americans lose jobs, and when Americans lose jobs, their families suffer, their communities suffer, and our Nation suffers.

It all comes down to Main Street Americans who want to work, who want to pay their bills, who want to take care of their families; their well-being is tied to the well-being of our economy and our Nation. Unemployment insurance is the mechanism by which Americans looking for jobs but who have lost their jobs can sustain their families, can keep their financial commitments, can afford the tools needed to find a new job.

I have heard too many cases where people could not even fill their gas tanks to go out searching for jobs, particularly in rural northwest and rural southeast Ohio.

Extending unemployment insurance is key to getting the economy going. It injects dollars into the economy and helps people meet their obligations, raise their kids, and do what they need to do in the community. It is one of the most important and immediate ways to stimulate the economy.

Relief for financial institutions was intended to prevent massive job loss, to stabilize the economy, to stem foreclosures. Extending unemployment insurance is intended to promote job growth, to stabilize the economy, and to stem foreclosures. It is the smart thing to do. It is the right thing to do. It holds one important advantage over the financial bailout. The people who benefit directly from an extension of unemployment compensation, from an extension of unemployment insurance, live on Main Street, with not a single Wall Street CEO in sight.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair. (The remarks of Mrs. FEINSTEIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3685 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.