

have a chance to do that in April, within 30 days.

So what you see is, in effect, all of the various ideas with respect to extending unemployment so that folks who are hurting so badly do not go without for a short period of time—a week, 2 weeks, 30 days—a variety of different approaches. All of those time periods are shorter than the time period for when we will have an opportunity to make tough decisions for the long term that we have heard Democrats and Republicans talking about this morning.

So I hope that we can get back to working in a bipartisan way around those two areas of agreement that will help folks who are hurting now, help them quickly, not have them suffer any more, even for a few additional days, and that we recognize that in April, on the Budget Committee on which I serve, we will have the opportunity to tackle the larger budget issues. We have very strong bipartisan leadership between Senator CONRAD and Senator GREGG. A lot of us thought they were right on their debt commission. I supported that, supported it for a long time. So we have an opportunity to make those long-term budget decisions Democrats and Republicans rightly have said are so important, beginning next month. So let's do both. Let's help people who are hurting now and recognize how serious the challenge is with respect to the long term as well.

The only other point I would make with respect to the unemployment extension is a point made by a number of our country's leading economists who are advising both Republicans and Democrats, again, in a bipartisan fashion. Mark Zandi, for example, one of our leading economists who is relied on by individuals of both political parties, has pointed out that for every dollar of unemployment, our country gets \$1.64 in return. The folks who are unemployed spend their benefits as quickly as they can get them. They spend them only on essentials. They spend them on the essentials of life.

It is pretty obvious that consumer spending is a very significant part of economic recovery. The economic recovery is obviously fragile. We have so many folks out of work, and those folks and the folks who are worried about losing their jobs put off spending on anything but the most basic needs. So obviously that slowdown in consumer spending also takes a toll on our economy. If we are going to make up for the decline in consumer spending, one obvious way, it seems to me, is to get this extra help to folks who are hurting so badly today in our country.

So it strikes me that the decision to not get help to people immediately is simply illogical. It is bad from the standpoint of economic recovery. It is obviously going to compound the hurt Americans who are out of work are experiencing now, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle have said they don't want that to happen.

So I am very hopeful that even before the end of the day, for the folks who are out of work, who are exhausting their unemployment and COBRA benefits—that there will be discussions here in the Senate to try to make sure folks are not denied the bare minimums that are needed to just get by and not denied even for just a few days. The fact is, these are folks who are making \$250, \$300 a week. None of them are living a life of leisure. No one can say these folks are somehow, as a result of their benefits, disinclined to find work. They are not part of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." They are the millions who today walk that economic tight-rope, always feeling that another big bill is going to push them into the abyss where they cannot afford to pay the rent, cannot afford to pay the utility bill, cannot afford food. It is not right to let these folks suffer.

I would submit that on a matter such as this, which is, in my view, a question of right and wrong, that is what extending unemployment benefits for a short period of time to prevent human suffering is all about, that we stay at this effort so folks who are hurting so badly in our country do not lose out, if even for only a few days. I will be at my post to continue to work and talk with colleagues of both political parties toward that end. We have to stay at it to ensure there is no break in the essential benefits the most vulnerable of our country so desperately needs.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2010

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4957, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Reserving the right to object, let me say that the Senator from Oregon has made some very good points, and he is exactly right. They are points we agree with on this side of the aisle.

I do not object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4957) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the funding and expenditure authority of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, to amend title 49, United States Code, to extend authorizations for the airport improvement program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 4957) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of Colorado). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONTINUING EXTENSION ACT, 2010

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I have listened to the debate in the last few hours, yesterday, and today. I have heard these debates for years about unemployment compensation, unemployment insurance. In the end, some of my colleagues vote for extension of unemployment benefits for hard-working Americans, Americans who have had jobs and are trying to find jobs but have lost their jobs.

When I saw what happened a month ago when Senator BUNNING, time and time again, single-handedly for a period of time—because of the peculiar rules of this institution, one Senator representing a State that has less than 1 percent of the population, one Senator representing a State which makes up less than 1 percent of the country—granted the minority leader is in that State too—one Senator can block the extension of unemployment compensation to millions of Americans, to people in Youngstown, Lima, Mansfield, or Chillicothe and Toledo. Now we have a handful of his colleagues doing the same thing.

Sometimes I think they don't understand unemployment compensation. They believe unemployment is welfare. It is called unemployment insurance. That doesn't mean people are looking for a handout. It means workers, as virtually everyone does who is working, pay into an insurance fund when they are working. The whole point is, if they lose their job they collect unemployment insurance.

It is like you buy car insurance, hoping you don't have to use it. But if you get in a car accident, you use the insurance to pay for it. Many people don't ever have to collect unemployment insurance. They are the lucky ones. It is the same with health insurance. You buy health insurance and you hope to not use it, but if you get sick, then you use your health insurance. Whether you are a worker in Boulder or Pueblo or Trinidad or Columbus or Dayton, you need that unemployment insurance as a backup.

So many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, so many conservatives think it is a welfare program: I got laid off. I can draw unemployment and stay on it, and I don't have to work. I can enjoy my time off.

It is not vacation. The New York Times had some articles the other day