

been out there telling reporters that what the Democrats are going for today is “contrast.” The senior Senator from New York said this is all about contrast—not about jobs, about contrast.

It does not seem to matter that this bill will not pass or that even if it did pass, American businesses would be stuck with a permanent tax hike. Forget about all of that. What matters most to the Democrats who control the Senate, according to the stories I have been reading, is that they have an issue to run on for next year. This whole exercise, by their own admission, is a charade that is meant to give Democrats a political edge in an election that is 13 months away.

Well, with all due respect to the senior Senator from New York, the American people don't want contrast, they want jobs. They want the Democrats who control the Senate to stop thinking about how they can improve their own political prospects 13 months from now and start thinking about how they can help other people's job prospects right now. They want Democrats to focus on job creation, not political preservation. So I have a better idea. How about we get this vote that Democrats already know will not pass behind us so we can focus on real job-creating legislation that we actually know is worthy of passing with bipartisan support. Republicans have been calling on Democrats to work with us on bipartisan job-creating bills for 3 years, and every once in a while we convince them.

Tomorrow, we will approve three free-trade agreements I have been calling on the President to approve since his first day in office. These agreements will not add a dime to the deficit, and they are expected by Democrats and Republicans to create tens of thousands of jobs. They will have strong bipartisan support, and they do not contain a single job-destroying tax hike.

Both parties also came together earlier this year to pass a patent reform bill President Obama and Democrats in Congress touted as a job creator, and Democrats and Republicans came together this summer to pass a highway bill extension, FAA extension, that will lead to just the kind of job creation that has bipartisan support. You don't hear much about any of this from the President. It gets in the way of his campaign strategy. But that does not mean Republicans cannot continue to urge the President to work with us, and that is just what we plan to do.

Over the next weeks and months, Republicans will continue to press our friends on the other side to work with us on legislation that will actually do something to create jobs in this country. Our first criteria for any proposal is that it would actually lead to more jobs, not fewer. I know that may seem crazy to some, but in our view it is not a jobs bill if it leads to fewer jobs. Our second criteria is that it does not add

to the deficit. There is no reason we need to exacerbate one crisis in an effort to tackle another one.

Democrats like to point out that the second stimulus we will have a vote on today is “paid for with tax hikes” and that it contains a “tax cut.” What they do not tell you, of course, is the tax cut lasts for 13 months, while the tax hikes last forever. They hide the fact that over the next 5 years it will actually increase the deficit, by nearly \$300 billion next year alone: Permanent tax increases, temporary tax cuts, increase the deficit by \$300 billion next year alone.

Another thing the Democratic supporters of this bill fail to mention is that about four out of five of the people who would be hit with their new taxes are, in fact, businesses, including thousands of small businesses across the country—in other words, the very people Americans rely on to create new jobs. So the legislation we will be voting on today is many things, but it is not a jobs bill. Republicans will gladly vote against any legislation that makes it harder to create jobs right now.

The President's advisers have said they are counting on a do-nothing Congress. That is why we will be voting for legislation today that is designed to fail. If you ask me, this is a pretty sad commentary on the state of the Democratic Party in Washington.

I think the American people deserve better. I think the 16.5 percent of Americans who are looking for work or who stopped looking for work deserve better. I think the 4.5 million Americans who have been out of work for more than a year deserve better. I think the nearly 15 percent of young Americans who cannot find work right now deserve better. Americans deserve more than a clumsy political stunt. They deserve better than the same well-rehearsed talking points we have been hearing from Democrats over the past few weeks. Above all, they deserve a different approach to this crisis than the one they have gotten from Democrats over the past few years. For nearly 3 years, Democrats in Congress have done virtually everything the President asked of them—everything he asked of them. And I would remind everyone that they owned the government the first 2 years of the Obama administration. They got everything they wanted. They passed his health care bill. They passed his financial regulations bill. They passed his stimulus. They waved through all the regulations, the bailouts, and the massive spending bills. And what did we get? A bad economy became worse; record deficits and debt; a first ever credit downgrade; and 1.7 million fewer jobs. Democrats may have run out of ideas, but Republicans are ready to work with them on a new approach. It is why we are here. And we are ready to act.

I yield the floor.

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 be in a period of morning business until 5:30, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

JOBS AGENDA

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise to talk a little bit about the conversation we just had on the floor.

There is no question that in the State of Tennessee and all across our country, I think the biggest item on anybody's mind is our economy and people having jobs in each of our States.

I still believe the very best thing we can do to create a sound economy is for this deficit committee to do what it needs to do in November and December and for us to show the American people we have the ability to deal with the big structural issues our country faces. I believe that with all my heart.

I don't think there is a business in our country today that is looking for some sugary stimulus bill that will be here and gone, leaving us with lots of debt and increased taxes down the road. I believe that.

I guess I am disappointed that again we are in a situation, just as we were last Thursday night, where we are really not here to solve problems—neither side, candidly—we are here to have some political stunt take place.

I do want to say to my friends on both sides of the aisle that there are numbers of people here who have worked hard to get the free-trade agreements in the place they need to be, and I think we are all expecting them to pass tomorrow. I think all of us who support these three free-trade agreements that have been languishing for 995 days—by the way, that includes lots of Senators on both sides of the aisle. I think what we just heard the leader say—that if we were to get on this jobs bill, as he is advocating we get on today, the likelihood of us actually taking up these free-trade agreements and passing them tomorrow is almost nil. I mean it is not going to happen. We know there are people who oppose the free-trade agreements, and I doubt very seriously that we are going to see a unanimous consent to move off a jobs bill that everyone knows is really for show on to something that is serious, such as the free-trade agreements that some people oppose.

So I have had lots of conversations with Senators on both sides of the aisle over the course of the last 72 hours regarding the need for us to have a real