

to believe sanctions are what brought the Iranians to the table in the first place. They were hurting. So it stands to reason that if the Iranians break the interim deal, they should get tougher sanctions. If nothing happens, we should send a message: You cannot keep talking forever. Something will happen at the end of the interim period.

That is especially true given the fact that we are actually running out of tools here short of the use of force. This bill is the best mechanism we have to keep the Iranians at the table until we get the right outcome and to ensure they are sticking to their end of the agreement. We should not fall victim to Iran's efforts at public diplomacy.

Let me repeat that a strong bipartisan majority in both Houses of Congress agrees with this approach, so there is simply no good reason for the majority leader to prevent a vote on this crucial legislation. He is gridlocking the Senate, preventing the Senate from working its will on a bill that enjoys broad bipartisan support, makes elementary good sense, and is the best hope we have to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. There is no excuse for muzzling the Congress on an issue of this importance to our national security, to the security of Israel, our closest ally in the Middle East, and to international stability more broadly.

I know many active members of AIPAC—the majority leader mentioned AIPAC. They want to have this vote. They will be coming to Washington next week from all over the country. I will bet this is a vote they want to have.

This is a rare issue that should unite both parties in common purpose. There is no question that it would if the majority leader would simply drop his reflexive deference to a President whose foreign policy is focused on withdrawing from our overseas commitments, a foreign policy that at worst poses a serious threat to our own security and that of our allies.

So once again I call on the majority leader to allow the Congress, allow the Senate to serve its purpose and express itself in our Nation's policy toward Iran. Let our constituents speak on this all-important issue on which so many of us in both parties actually agree.

In the Joint Plan of Action, the President made clear that he opposes additional sanctions. Why don't we let Congress speak? Let Congress have a voice. Let's stand together for a forward-deployed, ready, and lethal force that makes our commitments real in the eyes of friend and foe alike. Let's hold Iran accountable—actually hold them accountable. Let's do the right thing—approve this legislation and send it to the President's desk. The clock is ticking. The time to act is now.

#### CHANGE IN POLICY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Earlier this year I came to the floor to pose a simple question about President Obama's final years in office: Did he want to be remembered as a hero to the left or as a champion for the middle class? That is the question. I asked the question this way because for the past several years the left has basically had its run of this White House. During that period the politically connected and the already powerful have clearly prospered. But what about the middle class? They feel as though they have been shut out altogether as household income has plummeted and families who were struggling to pay the bills have gotten left behind by a President and a party who claimed to act in their name.

So I wanted to know: Did the President plan to continue down the same ideological road he has taken us on or would he change course and embrace effective proposals that would make a real difference in the lives of middle-class Americans? Would he reach across the aisle to jump-start job creation and make the economy work for the middle class again?

Well, over the last few months we appear to have gotten our answer. Once more, the real concerns of ordinary Americans have been pushed aside in favor of the preoccupation of the political left. Yet again we have seen the truth of the old saying that a liberal never lets the facts get in the way of a good theory. Once again we have seen how liberal policies end up hurting the very people they claim to help.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the debate over the minimum wage. As a recent CBO report made clear, the President's bill basically amounts to a terrible real-world tradeoff, helping one group of low-income Americans by undercutting another group of low-income Americans. How is that fair? Americans are crying out for jobs. Job creation is the top issue in our country. Our unemployment and underemployment rates have remained abysmally high more than half a decade after this President took office. What is the White House's solution? A bill that might sound good in theory but could cost as many as 1 million jobs, according to CBO.

The Congressional Budget Office released another report, this one on ObamaCare. There is a similar story: 2.5 million fewer Americans in jobs thanks to ObamaCare; huge disincentives to work thanks to ObamaCare. That is what CBO says.

Of course, Washington Democrats—the same folks who promised you could keep your health plan if you liked it—told Americans not to believe their own eyes, that ObamaCare would simply liberate them from jobs. ObamaCare would simply liberate them from jobs. It is just unbelievable, especially when we consider that the law's medical device tax alone is projected to kill as many as 33,000 jobs and that 60 percent of business owners and HR pro-

fessionals recently surveyed said ObamaCare will negatively impact jobs. As a member of that group recently put it, "Small businesses have an incentive to stay small" under ObamaCare. That is because ObamaCare can punish businesses that choose to hire more workers.

In my home State of Kentucky, the tension between the priorities of the left and the needs of real people is on full display. That is because the Obama administration has trained its sights on some of our most vulnerable citizens. One administration adviser actually used the words "war on coal" to essentially describe what the administration is doing or, in his view, probably should be doing to hard-working miners who just want to put food on the table.

Those were his words, not mine. Here is why: Because according to liberal elites in Washington, these folks are standing in the way of their theories. A practical approach that actually takes the concerns and anxieties of those people into account would promote clean energy even as it acknowledged the real-world benefits of traditional sources of energy.

My point is this: The administration has broken faith with the middle class, and it has stirred up strong emotions, especially among those who actually want to see a better life for those struggling to make it in our States. Almost everyone feels let down. A lot of folks are very angry.

It is a real tragedy, not only because of the missed opportunities and the human cost of these policies but also because when the President ran for office, he promised a very different approach.

It is tragic because the very folks he has talked about helping are the ones who seem to suffer the most under his Presidency.

It is tragic because it appears as if he has answered the question I posed in January: that he is prepared to double down on the left and throw in the towel on the middle class. How else can you explain the obsession with all of these peripheral ideological issues at a time when Americans are demanding good, stable, high-paying jobs and a new direction, at a time when folks' wages are stagnant but their costs always seem to be rising, at a time when younger Americans seem to be resigned to a harder life than their parents had? How else can you explain why the President has refused to sign off on projects such as Keystone Pipeline that would create thousands of jobs or why he refuses to push his own party to join Republicans and support trade legislation that could create even more jobs?

This cannot be the legacy the President really wants to leave, but it is the legacy he will be ensuring for himself if he does not change. There is still time to alter the course. There is still time for the President to acknowledge that there is no reconciling the demands of his base and the concerns of the middle class. It is one or the other.

The real solution here is liberating the private sector. The real solution is to implement policies that will increase wages for everyone instead of pursuing policies that essentially seek to distribute slices of a smaller pie to some. Of course, making a turn toward authentic job creation might make the left mad, but it is the only way to get the gears of our economy working again and college graduates off their parents' couches and onto a path of earned success.

Maybe the President will show some change of heart in Minnesota today. Maybe he will recognize, for instance, that killing thousands of high-tech jobs in the medical device industry is not worth the pain it is causing. Who knows? Who knows? I sure hope so because if you have entered the sixth year of trying to fix an economy and you are still talking about emergency unemployment benefits, it is time to recognize that your policies have not worked for the middle class. It is time for a fresh start.

Before I go, I would like to highlight one more dividing line between the dreams of the left and the well-being of our constituents. It is a topic I spoke about yesterday; that is, Medicare Advantage.

As I asked then: Why would the administration want to raid a program that is working, such as Medicare Advantage, to fund a program that does not work, such as ObamaCare? Why would Senate Democrats vote time and time again to do that? They must have known that taking \$300 billion from Medicare Advantage to fund ObamaCare would have real-world impacts on seniors, such as losing choices and coverage and doctors they now enjoy. It is not fair. It is not right. Several of my colleagues will be coming to the floor to speak more about this issue this morning.

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 for 2 hours, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nebraska.

#### HEALTH CARE

Mr. JOHANNIS. Yesterday I had the opportunity to come to the floor of the Senate and talk about ObamaCare's broken promises for our Nation's seniors.

The administration's most recent proposal to significantly cut Medicare Advantage is certainly not news to my colleagues on the floor today. During the health care debate, we warned over and over again that cutting \$½ trillion from Medicare to fund ObamaCare would have disastrous consequences and that it certainly would not strengthen Medicare. The law drains \$308 billion from a very well-received Medicare Advantage Program.

The stories from Nebraskans illustrate how these cuts are hurting senior citizens. I heard from a couple in Carney, NE. They wrote to me saying that the Medicare Advantage plan they had for several years was something they liked. It was a plan that worked for them, but that plan, because of ObamaCare, was cancelled. She went on to say to me that another plan was going to cost more money and higher rates were coming for them.

She said: "I have not been shy about telling people that we lost our insurance plan thanks to ObamaCare!"

I could add to that that she has lost her insurance plan—and thousands of others, tens of thousands of others across the United States—because of the votes of the majority and the President.

A Nebraskan from Hastings shared that her Medicare Advantage plan was discontinued and her new Medicare Advantage plan option was, get this, 357 percent more expensive. Is that fair treatment to that senior citizen?

When ObamaCare was passed, we tried to get amendments done that if there were any savings in Medicare, it would go back to Medicare to protect the system. That was voted down by the majority.

What we ended with is a situation where those funds were pulled out of Medicare and used to finance ObamaCare. For millions of Americans and about 35,000 Nebraskans who rely upon Medicare Advantage, this law has not delivered on its promises.

As I have said over and over since this debate began, I have been committed to ensuring that Medicare is sustainable for decades to come, not only for the current generation but for our children and our grandchildren. The health care law does not accomplish this goal, and I believe strongly it needs to be repealed.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. I come to the floor also to talk about a letter I got from Wyoming from a constituent, Traci, who lives in Rock Springs, WY. She is very concerned about the health care law. It is interesting because she writes after hearing on the news last week a clip of Secretary Sebelius. It is a clip where Secretary Sebelius claims there is no indication that the ACA is responsible for any job loss.

Traci in Rock Springs, WY, sees Secretary Sebelius on television and wants to let the country know—and I am

doing that for Traci today—that the Secretary is wrong.

Traci says: "My life is a prime example. Let me explain just how the ACA has destroyed my life."

The quote she is referencing is Secretary Sebelius last week said: "There is absolutely no evidence, and every economist will tell you this, that there is any job loss related to the Affordable Care Act."

It almost seems like a deliberate deception, an effort by the Secretary to mislead the American people, saying: Who are you going to believe, Secretary Sebelius or your own two eyes when you see what is happening in your own communities?

That is why Traci wrote to me from Rock Springs, WY.

Traci said she works full time. She also maintains a number of part-time jobs. She has a master's degree.

She says: "Once the ACA was passed, I saw the writing on the wall, and so did the companies I work for."

Isn't it interesting that Traci in Rock Springs, WY, could see the writing on the wall, the companies she worked for could see the writing on the wall, and yet the Democrats in this body who voted for this law couldn't see the writing on the wall.

She said she had health insurance and that these companies wouldn't have had to provide her with anything because she had insurance—wouldn't have had to provide her with anything. But they didn't know who might and might not have insurance, and they weren't taking the chance that they would have to offer health care to a large number of people. So what these companies basically did, she said, was hire a specific number of individuals full time and thus those of us who remained part-time employees have been cut way back. This is obviously impacting her wages, her take-home pay, the things that matter to her, and it seems that Democrats, including Secretary Sebelius, couldn't care less.

It was interesting. I came to the floor yesterday with an article from the New York Times last week about all of these public jobs, people working for public schools, people working for community colleges, sanitation workers for communities, counties—all of these people having their hours cut, their take-home pay cut, their wages cut, and it is because of the health care law, specifically because of the health care law.

Traci continues:

I can't believe in a country my grandfather came to and lived the American dream is actually actively trying to prevent me from being able to do the work I want to do. The kind of work I am good at. The kind of work that others benefit from. What was the comment last week about how I am being liberated from my job to do what I truly want.

It is astonishing. What she says is: I was doing what I truly wanted.

But yet, according to the Democrats, according to NANCY PELOSI, the former Speaker of the House, she is now being