

cost increases would have on their businesses. One gentleman who employs 30 workers at a Dairy Queen in South Dakota told me that a \$3 increase in the minimum wage would cost his business an additional \$100,000 per year. That is a huge amount for a small business in a rural area of South Dakota. To deal with these costs, this owner, like so many other small business owners around the country, is going to be forced to hike prices on the products he offers, and that will affect individuals and families in South Dakota and across the country.

Middle-class families have already seen their incomes fall by nearly \$3,500 on this President's watch. The Congressional Budget Office makes clear that a minimum wage hike will mean their purchasing power will be even further reduced and eroded.

The evidence is clear: Minimum wage hikes cost jobs. When informed that they cost jobs, the strong majority of Americans reject these hikes, but unfortunately Democrats have a habit of ignoring both the evidence and the American people.

Take ObamaCare. Democrats jammed the bill through Congress on a party-line vote over the objections of the American people and despite plenty of evidence to suggest that ObamaCare wouldn't work. But, committed to their liberal fantasy of successful government-run health care, they ignored all the evidence to the contrary and forced the bill through. The American people are suffering as a result—canceled health care plans, lost doctors and hospitals, higher prices, fewer choices, and reduced access to medications. The list goes on and on.

Last week the fifth annual U.S. Bank Small Business Survey reported that businesses now rank health care as their No. 1 concern. More than 60 percent of them, quoting from the survey, "now say the long-term impact of the Affordable Care Act will be negative on their business."

Another article over the weekend reported that "health insurers are preparing to raise rates next year for plans issued under the Affordable Care Act."

Still another article from The Hill newspaper on Saturday stated that Democrats in competitive elections generally regard ObamaCare as a four-letter word, with many of their campaign Web sites omitting any reference to the law.

Democrats know ObamaCare has failed, but instead of trying to replace the law, they are just trying to distract with more bad policies that make it even harder to create jobs in this country.

American families are hurting. They need jobs—steady, good-paying jobs. Yet Democrats are ignoring this priority in favor of liberal pet projects that pander to their political base.

There is a clear contrast developing in the Senate: Democrats are offering distractions and Republicans are offer-

ing proposals that would spur job creation, increase opportunity, and help middle-class families, proposals such as Senator HOEVEN's bill to force approval of the Keystone Pipeline and the 42,000 jobs the President's own State Department says it would support.

There is Senator COLLINS' proposal to amend the ObamaCare 30-hour work-week provision that is causing employers to cut hours.

We have the proposal from Senators HATCH, TOOMEY, and COATS to repeal ObamaCare's tax on lifesaving medical devices such as pacemakers and insulin pumps—a tax that has already negatively affected tens of thousands of jobs in this industry and stands ready to damage many more.

Then there is Senator PORTMAN's bill to require executive branch agencies to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of new regulations so that fewer burdensome, job-killing regulations emerge from the administration.

There are bills from Senator LEE, Senator MCCONNELL, and Senator AYOTTE to give working parents more flexibility in the workplace so that they can make it to more soccer games and more dance recitals while maintaining steady jobs.

Senator RUBIO has a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow employers to give raises to deserving employees.

Then there is my own to help long-term unemployed workers by providing them with a one-time low-interest loan of up to \$10,000 to start a new job or to relocate to a State or metropolitan area with lower unemployment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. THUNE. Those are the issues on which we should be focused. I hope we will start—and start creating jobs and opportunities for the American people.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sheryl H. Lipman, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Jon Tester, Barbara Boxer, Charles E. Schumer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, John D. Rockefeller IV, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Patty Murray, Tom Udall, Angus S. King, Jr.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, we will vote to end filibusters on the nominations of Sheryl Lipman to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee, Stanley Bastian to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington, Manish Shah to a judicial emergency vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Daniel Crabtree to the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas, Judge Cynthia Bashant to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California, and Judge Jon Levy to the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine. These are just 6 of the 31 judicial nominees currently pending on the Senate Floor.

Every single one of these nominees was voted out of the Judiciary Committee with bipartisan support and every single one of these nominees has the support of their home State Senators. Nevertheless, we are once again being forced to follow the costly ritual of filing and voting on cloture for non-controversial nominees and wasting valuable floor time repeating this exercise. Meanwhile, it is our Federal Judiciary and the American people who suffer from these delays.

I recently heard remarks from the Minority Leader claiming that "many of these nominees would have been confirmed last December had we not" instituted the rules change. This statement is simply belied by the facts. Senate Republicans have obstructed and slowed the nominations process throughout this President's entire tenure—in both his first and second terms. At the end of each calendar year, Senate Republicans deliberately refuse to vote on several judicial nominees who could and should be confirmed in order to consume additional time the following year confirming these nominees. This has happened at the conclusion of every single year of the Obama presidency.

At the end of 2009, they left 10 nominations on the Executive Calendar without a vote. Two of those nominations were returned to the President, and it subsequently took 9 months for the Senate to take action on the other 8. This resulted in the lowest 1-year confirmation total in at least 35 years. In 2010 and 2011, Senate Republicans left 19 nominations on the Senate Executive Calendar at the end of each year. It then took nearly half the following year for the Senate to confirm these nominees. In 2012, Senate Republicans left 11 judicial nominees without action and another four had hearings but Republicans refused to expedite their consideration. In 2013, Senate Republicans left 9 nominations on the Executive Calendar. Another 15 judicial