

So the Senate responded and found a path forward, and it was a difficult path. Majority leader HARRY REID dedicated a vast amount of floor time. Our bipartisan coalition reached a true compromise and stuck together on vote after vote. On April 7, 43 days ago, the full Senate approved the measure.

Unfortunately, Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans in charge have refused to take up our bipartisan legislation or pass their own extension of these emergency efforts. Because of their obstruction, millions of Americans are hurting.

We need to get our country back to full unemployment. That is the fundamental answer—to place people in jobs.

We have to move the country to a place where all Americans have an opportunity to earn a living and build a better life for their families.

Some may be tempted to look at the latest unemployment numbers and say: Well, see, ending job benefits is working because the numbers seem to be falling.

That notion is simply not supported by the facts. This long-term unemployment problem is still, as I mentioned, of significant proportions, and those are precisely the people who benefit from extended unemployment benefits.

A recent study by the Illinois Department of Employment Security found that four of five Illinois workers who lost long-term unemployment benefits at the end of last year were still without work 2 months later. They are still struggling in a very difficult market.

I would agree with the director of this State agency who says: "Economic conditions should determine when this safety-net program ends, not an arbitrary date on the calendar."

The economic conditions for the long-term unemployed are still perilous, and it is still an emergency. The Speaker's refusal to renew emergency unemployment insurance makes it even harder for struggling Americans to feed their families, and it does nothing to improve our economic outlook.

The Senate-passed bill was fully off-set and included, in fact, deficit reduction. So the idea that it was too expensive doesn't hold water.

The fact that House Republicans are now moving \$300 billion worth of budget-busting tax breaks, many of which flow to corporations, but refuse to renew emergency benefits for job seekers strikes many people, including myself, as not just an unfair double standard but as out of step with what we need to do to get this economy moving forward.

Let me again remind everyone, we had a fully paid-for unemployment extension bill on a bipartisan basis that actually resulted in some deficit reduction and the House has refused to take it up. But in the meantime, they are moving \$300 billion worth of tax cuts and tax breaks over several years, which flow to corporations, and all of it unpaid for.

So for the sake of job seekers in our economy, I hope House Republicans

will stop obstructing emergency aid to job seekers. They need to take up the bipartisan Senate agreement to restore these benefits and work with us on strengthening our economic recovery. Just give the bill an up-or-down vote and give millions of American job seekers the chance to get back on their feet. In fact, I am confident if there were an up-or-down vote it would pass the House. It is fiscally responsible, fully paid for, it provides assistance to people and families who desperately need it, and would help the economic climate in every State in this country.

They can attach measures to the bill if they want. That is their prerogative. But let us go ahead and get a bill passed, and if we need to resolve the bill between the House and Senate, let us do so. Refusing a vote is irresponsible. The American people deserve better, and I hope they will see better in the coming days ahead.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the previous order, today, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendars No. 521, 622, and 765, and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, equally divided in the usual form; that any rollcall votes following the first in each series be 10 minutes in duration; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that following disposition of these nominations the Senate proceed under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. What this means is tonight at 5:30 p.m. we could have as many as five rollcall votes. Some of these votes could be confirmed by voice, so we will wait and see about that, so there would be maybe only two rollcall votes, on confirmation of Jeffrey Costa to be a U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit and cloture on Stanley Fischer to be a member of the Federal Reserve Board.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding rule XXII and the previous order, if cloture is invoked on Calendar No. 768, Fischer, on Wednesday, May 21, 2014, at 12:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session and all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of Calendar No. 768, Fischer; further, that following disposition of Calendar No. 768, the Senate be in recess until 2 p.m.; that at 2 p.m., there be 10 minutes for debate, equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to a vote on cloture on the nomination of Barron, Calendar No. 576; further, that if cloture is invoked, on Thursday at 2 p.m., all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the Barron nomination with all other remaining provisions of the previous order remaining in effect; finally, that following the cloture vote on the Barron nomination, the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar Nos. 773, Cook; 774, Daly; 775, Green; and 743, Martinez; and vote on confirmation thereof in the order listed; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, equally divided in the usual form; that any rollcall votes following the first in each series be 10 minutes in length; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. With this agreement, on Wednesday, we expect one rollcall vote at 12:15 p.m. on confirmation of the Fischer nomination, and as many as five rollcall votes at 2:10 p.m. We hope all four votes will be by voice, but we have to wait and see.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:39 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

VA HEALTH CARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the steady trickle of allegations surrounding abuses of our veterans has turned from a trickle into a monsoon. It seems every day that goes by there is an additional bad news story about appointment lists that have been