

with such wide-ranging consequences. And the American people should have a say.

The interim agreement we saw from the administration would not only allow Iran to continue to enrich uranium and retain thousands of centrifuges but also allow it to continue researching and developing even more advanced centrifuges. In other words, it seems more like an agreement built around Iran's terms rather than a plan to advance what should be our national goal, which is ending Iran's nuclear program.

It is a matter of great concern not just to our country but to the entire world. The concerns of our allies and partners with regard to Iran's aggressive behavior throughout the Middle East were made clear when I recently led a Senate delegation to Israel, Jordan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

This is a gravely important matter, and the American people aren't just spectators here; they and the representatives they elect deserve a seat at the table too. Today's bipartisan action in the Foreign Relations Committee will help ensure they do.

As I mentioned earlier, there will be a lot of activity in the Senate this week on a range of issues. It is good for the functioning of the Senate, but it also helps underline one clear point: The new Congress is back to work again on behalf of the American people.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NATIONAL EQUAL PAY DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, people at home cannot see it, but every desk here on the Senate floor has a name on it. Mine says "Mr. REID." Right behind me is one that says "Mrs. MURRAY." To my right is one that says "Mr. MCCONNELL." Why do I mention this? Today is National Equal Pay Day, a day that symbolizes how far into 2015 American women must work to earn what their male counterparts earned in 2014. That day is today. Women basically worked for nothing until today. This pay disparity between men and women doing the same work is known as the wage gap. Unlike the desks here in the Chamber, the wage gap does not bear a visible stamp of ownership, but make no mistake—Republicans in Congress absolutely own the wage gap. Their names are all over it. The Republicans'

refusal to address income disparities makes them responsible for the additional 3 months and 14 days that American women work to earn what their male counterparts earn doing the exact same work at the exact same time.

Who are these working American women who are being forced to work for months just to catch up on wages? They are our daughters, our wives, our granddaughters, and our neighbors. Republicans' repeated filibusters of equal pay legislation makes them responsible for working women in our families having to make due on 78 cents for every dollar their male counterparts make.

Democrats have tried repeatedly to pass Senator MIKULSKI's Paycheck Fairness Act, which would take away the disparity. It is pretty simple: If a man and a woman do the same work—no different—they should be paid the same amount of money. Very simple. We repeatedly tried to pass this simple legislation. This legislation provides working American women with the tools they need to close the wage gap. Yet, time and time again, Republicans have stonewalled this most basic issue of fairness. Five years ago, the Republicans filibustered the Paycheck Fairness Act. Two years later, the Republicans did the same thing. Last year, they blocked the bill two times. Just last month in the budget debate, Senator MIKULSKI gave the Republicans another chance. Once again, the Republicans blocked it. Five times in 5 years Republicans have blocked equal pay for women. Five times in 5 years Republicans have told their very own sisters, daughters, and wives, and, of course, their grandchildren that they are not interested in fixing this unfair income disparity. That is why I say the Republicans own the wage gap. They own it.

Today, as we recognize Equal Pay Day, I hope my Republican colleagues come to their senses and address this injustice which is hurting millions of American families.

American women deserve equal pay for equal work. My daughter deserves equal pay for equal work.

Would the Presiding Officer announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant Democratic leader.

ILLINOIS TORNADOES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week on Thursday, the evil forces of nature struck in Fairdale, IL. Since

that moment of terrible loss—two lives and many injuries, terrible property destruction—we have seen the better angels of our nature come forward.

This is an all-too-common picture in my part of the world in central Illinois and downstate Illinois. This is the devastation from a tornado of dramatic power and strength. Two twisters—one of them a category EF-4, with wind speeds of up to 200 miles an hour—tore through DeKalb and Ogle Counties and badly damaged the towns of Fairdale and Rochelle last Thursday evening. That picture tells part of the story of the tornadoes' path, where giant trees were uprooted, homes ripped from their foundations. The damage is stunning.

Sadly, two women, neighbors who lived in Fairdale, lost their lives in the event. Geraldine Schultz and a close friend and neighbor, Jacklyn Klosa, both fell victim to the tornado that struck their homes. Neighbors say the two friends were inseparable in life and both departed life at the same moment.

The tight-knit communities of Fairdale and Rochelle are pulling together today to help victims sort through the rubble. One tornado tracked a 25-mile continuous path from near Rochelle through Fairdale, to near Belvidere.

This is a photo of what was, until Thursday, a popular restaurant in the town of Rochelle, IL, about 80 miles from Chicago. Twelve people, including diners and staff, were inside Grubsteakers Restaurant when the tornado struck. It was a miracle. Everybody made it into the basement just in time before the twister hit. They all survived, though they were trapped in the basement for an hour and a half waiting for rescue crews to clear them.

A few people had to be treated for cuts and bruises. Everyone was covered in thick dust that had blown from overhead, but they lived through it, a terrible, terrifying ordeal. On Friday I spoke and again on Saturday with the director, the head of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, James Joseph. Governor Rauner was out at the scene the next day after the tornado. We sent our staff there to monitor any possible Federal assistance that might be coordinated with the State and local effort.

We are continuing to gather the information together to see if there is a possibility of Federal help, but I have been very wary because of two recent experiences in Illinois—in Washington, IL, and Harrisburg—where tornado damage there looked so devastating and still did not meet the threshold qualification for Federal assistance.

When I spoke with Rochelle Mayor Chet Olson, and DeKalb County board chairman Mark Pietrowski, I told them to do their homework and keep track of their expenses but that it was a long shot for Federal help. I made it clear the delegation and I stand ready to help in any way we can, particularly working with the Governor.

As is so often the case when a disaster such as this strikes, the first responders, friends, and family members wasted no time rushing to the aid of people whose homes and businesses were damaged. I have no doubt the people in Fairdale, Rochelle, and all of the other areas that were struck will clean up and rebuild. They will mourn the loss of life, they will heal the wounds of those who were injured, and they will start tomorrow to make another day.

For the families of the women who lost their lives and for everybody who lost homes and property, our thoughts are with you.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 11:30 a.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:36 a.m., recessed until 11:31 a.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. FLAKE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tomorrow is April 15. April 15 is a date that causes a great deal of stress and anxiety for hard-working American taxpayers. For millions of American families, this year is going to be worse than ever before. The Obama health care law, ObamaCare, is making tax day harder for Americans.

American taxpayers who were forced into the ObamaCare system—well, they are having to fill out even more forms this year than in the past, so many forms that the Internal Revenue Service can then enforce all of the President's health care mandates. It is a complicated and burdensome process.

President Obama promised that buying health insurance through ObamaCare was going to be as easy as buying a television on Amazon. Well, why didn't the President ever say it was going to be so difficult to satisfy the IRS? Why didn't the President say that hard-working American taxpayers would have to fill out pages and pages of forms just to find out if they had actually paid the right amount for their health insurance? Why didn't the President say that people who changed jobs during the year might have to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars to the IRS?

That doesn't happen when you buy a television on Amazon. Amazon tells

you the price, and that is what you pay. Amazon doesn't make you fill out the forms on April 15; Amazon doesn't demand more money from you after the amount you paid. But that is what is happening to millions of Americans across the country. Taxes were already too complicated. Now, because of ObamaCare, it is much worse.

For this year's tax filing season, the IRS released seven new forms that people might have to fill out to comply with the new health care law. The instructions alone for these forms are 46 pages long.

A married couple with 2 children might have to enter numbers and other information into 133 individual boxes on just 1 of the new ObamaCare tax forms. A family could spend more time filling out one of these forms than they used to spend filling out their entire tax returns in the past.

So for people who go through all of this effort, the results actually still can be terrifying.

CNN ran a report earlier this year about the problem. The headline was: "I have to pay back my ObamaCare subsidy." They told the story of Janice Riddle from Los Angeles. She got an ObamaCare subsidy last year. Then when she got a new job, she forgot to tell the IRS about the new job. They sort of knew because she was getting paid from the new job and she was paying taxes, but she didn't actually alert the IRS about it from the standpoint of ObamaCare. So when she was doing taxes this year, she learned she has to pay back the entire amount of the subsidy, more than \$5,000.

She told CNN:

I'm in shock . . . but I have no choice. Do I want to argue with the IRS or the Obama administration?

Well, Janice is not alone. The Obama administration says as many as 7.5 million families in America will have to reconcile their ObamaCare subsidies on their taxes for 2014 when they have the filing deadline tomorrow.

According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, last month only 4 percent of all the families who qualified for a subsidy got the right amount. So the Kaiser Family Foundation did a study last month, and what they have come out with is only 4 percent of all the families across the country who qualified for a subsidy got the right amount. The study found that half of all U.S. households that were eligible for a subsidy would have to pay back some of it with their taxes this year. The average amount they are going to have to pay back is \$794.

One of those people who just found out he owes the government so much money is Rob Tuck from Dublin, CA. According to an article last week by the Associated Press, he said he had expected to actually get a refund for his taxes—a refund of \$400 for his taxes from his work last year. It turns out his refund has been almost wiped out—wiped out—to repay some of the subsidy he got to buy an expensive

ObamaCare policy. He changed jobs during the year. He got a little extra income. In America, that should be a good thing, you get extra income. Well, not for him. It came with a large pricetag from the government. He said he enrolled in the plan to avoid the tax penalties of being uninsured, and he says that now he feels penalized by the Obama administration anyway.

Another person who is feeling penalized by the President's health care law is Bill Preus of St. Petersburg, FL. He was quoted in the same Associated Press article last week. This man was only on ObamaCare for 3 months. After that time, he went onto Medicare. Well, there was poor coordination between the ObamaCare Web site, healthcare.gov, and his insurance company. Because of that, he may have to pay the IRS close to \$4,000.

Now, the man used to own an insurance agency, and, according to the article, he said he is used to complexity, but he said he never has seen anything like this. He told the Associated Press: "It's a total mess."

His tax preparer and the IRS both told him—his tax preparer and the IRS—that the best thing to do was to file an incomplete return so it would trigger an audit and then they could sort things out.

Is that the President's idea of his health care plan being as easy to use as buying a TV on Amazon? This man has to go through an IRS audit. That is what they are hoping for, to get audited by the IRS. Apparently, that is the easiest way for Washington to figure out its own rules. It is outrageous.

When the President, in the past, has been asked about the health care law, he said it is actually working better than he expected. What did he expect when people are telling stories such as these?

The President's health care law is more than 2,000 pages long. It paid for thousands of IRS agents—people to investigate American taxpayers to make sure they comply with all the law's destructive and expensive mandates. But all of that complexity has become a disaster. This law has been bad for patients, it has been bad for providers, and as we reach the IRS filing deadline tomorrow, it is clear this law is terrible for taxpayers.

This isn't what Democrats promised, and it is not what the American people wanted. People didn't want more red-tape, more stress. They just wanted the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. That is what Republicans in the Senate are working to give them. We can do it without more IRS audits. We can do it without a 2,000-page law. We can do it without making tax day harder for Americans. We can do it without all the negative side effects of ObamaCare.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.