

seems there should be some sort of assumption that if Americans discovered a foreigner was on the other end of that telephone, they would either hang up the telephone or otherwise lodge some sort of protest upon hearing that foreigner was in another country. The only way this bill would save jobs is if we assume Americans are so violently xenophobic we do not and would not tolerate even this modest level of international agreement.

Senator KERRY's legislation is indicative of the choice we face as a country. We can choose the path of freedom, where every individual and every company can do as he or she sees fit and trust that people are going to work hard on their own behalf, and in doing so promote the common good or we can choose a path of more Government, more Government mandates with less freedom, with less prosperity, and fewer jobs, one in which every time you call a company to see if they have an item in stock, the Federal Government will force you and the company to identify the exact longitude and latitude of the operator who is on the other end of that telephone call.

The reality is we compete today in a global economy. We cannot close our borders to the world. Some think we can retreat into economic isolationism, but we simply cannot. Times are different. We shouldn't. That, in many ways, given our world economy, would be a declaration of defeat.

We are the most innovative society in the world today. Our workers lead all others in the world in productivity. If we are allowed to compete on a fair playing field, United States manufacturers can and indeed will lead the world.

We had a chance last week to help U.S. manufacturers by repealing the Euro tax on our U.S. manufacturers. Unfortunately, we were met by obstruction on the other side. While I was disappointed at this outcome, recent history indicates that should not have been much of a surprise. If there has been one thing consistent over the last several months, it has been the Democrats' steadfast refusal toward legislation that would help reduce the cost of manufacturing in the United States. Every time we attempt to move legislation forward that addresses the concerns of manufacturing, we have been met by obstruction. With class action, with energy, with medical liability, to Workforce Investment Act, we have been blocked. It is either by filibuster or by objections going to conference.

Next month we are going to be addressing issues that I hope will bring some fairness and justice to certain challenges that we have today.

I have pointed out that we would like to address the issue of asbestos litigation reform. I look forward to hopefully being able to address that in a bipartisan way.

The loss of a few hundred thousand jobs per year to offshoring is a small part of the constant pace of job cre-

ation and destruction that goes on in the U.S. labor market. We need to address dislocation. We can do that with aggressive education and training.

But it is precisely because each job loss is painful that we need to focus on ways to stimulate employment generally rather than focusing on legislation to address a tiny percent of the population.

In closing, we need to keep our focus on proposals that look to the future to help companies create and keep new jobs. We cannot be focused on the past but really the present. We need to be looking ahead all the time.

As Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan stated earlier this month:

Time and again through our history, we have discovered that attempting merely to preserve the comfortable features of the present, rather than reaching for new levels of prosperity, is a sure path to stagnation.

We only need to look across the Atlantic to see the results of those policies of stagnation. Instead, Republicans will keep working for policies of growth and for innovation to help America compete and win in the 21st century.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

SENATE SCHEDULE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I appreciate very much the desire of the majority leader and our friends on the other side of the aisle in addressing many of these issues. He mentioned the JOBS bill, welfare reform reauthorization, and the importance of reaching some agreement on energy. I have indicated on several occasions that we are more than prepared to work through each one of these bills. We simply want to be heard on amendments about which we care a great deal.

I will not ask consent to do it this morning, but I would entertain a unanimous consent agreement to go to the energy bill today and work through the amendments. I think there would be a good debate. Ultimately, there could be a conclusive debate about the energy bill.

We will see what happens in our work with the House, which we have had to do now on several occasions. The same is true with the FSC/ETI bill. We would be prepared to go to the floor with a number of amendments.

People on the other side of the aisle, for whatever reason, have refused to allow us an opportunity to have an up-or-down vote on protecting worker's overtime, on minimum wage, and on unemployment compensation.

There are other outsourcing amendments that we think ought to be debated. What better place to debate

them than on a bill that relates to international commerce.

It isn't our unwillingness to have a good debate; it is our unwillingness to be locked out of the process. Whether it is in conference or whether it is on the floor, we have been prevented closure on each of these bills. I am hopeful that over the course of the next 2 days we can reach some accommodation.

I have indicated that I thought we could finish the welfare bill by the end of next week. We will work to see that happens. But unfortunately, we are not at a point where any kind of procedural agreement has been reached to allow that to happen, either. I will continue to talk with the distinguished majority leader about ways in which to accommodate our concerns and his very understandable concerns about completing the work.

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the House was scheduled to take up its version of the transportation bill yesterday.

At the eleventh hour—or rather at 7 a.m. this morning—the Rules Committee met and appears to have finally found a way to bring the bill to the House floor and allow for debate, although they will not allow a clear vote on a key amendment that would raise the level of investment in the bill.

Let me just say, this is astounding.

We have already gone 184 days with one temporary extension after another. These unnecessary delays have cost our Nation roughly 100,000 jobs.

State and local governments could not begin the contracting process, and employers couldn't plan ahead. As a result, there are 100,000 fewer Americans working today than there should be.

Unless we agree on a transportation bill before the end of April, when the current extension expires, tens of thousands more jobs will be lost.

Let us put this delay in perspective.

First, let us all remember who controls not only the House and Senate but the executive branch of our government—one party controls all three.

The President has claimed he was going to change the way government works. Well, he has everything he needs—control of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

And how has he done on changing the way government works? In the instance of our Nation's transportation infrastructure, he has steered us toward a real-life work stoppage.

It was 184 days ago that the law that governs our Nation's transportation infrastructure and all of the programs that deal with transportation expired.

We have been operating on temporary extensions to the law for 184 days.

Is the delay because Democrats have blocked a bill or used parliamentary tactics? No.

In fact, it wasn't until November that a bill was even reported by a Senate committee and not until February when we passed the bill in the Senate.