

A bill (S. 2718) to withhold 10 percent of the Federal funding apportioned for highway construction and maintenance from States that issue driver's licenses to individuals without verifying the legal status of such individuals.

A bill (S. 2719) to provide that Executive Order 13166 shall have no force or effect, and to prohibit the use of funds for certain purposes.

A bill (S. 2720) to withhold Federal financial assistance from each country that denies or unreasonably delays the acceptance of nationals of such country who have been ordered removed from the United States and to prohibit the issuance of visas to nationals of such country.

A bill (S. 2721) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to prescribe the binding oath or affirmation of renunciation and allegiance required to be naturalized as a citizen of the United States, to encourage and support the efforts of prospective citizens of the United States to become citizens, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2722) to prohibit aliens who are repeat drunk drivers from obtaining legal status or immigration benefits.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. REID. Madam President, we had the opportunity last year to debate, at great length, immigration. We spent weeks of Senate time on immigration. I appreciate the concern of those interested in moving those bills we reported. We knew it was coming. There was a big press fanfare that these bills were coming.

What we tried to do last year, and there was bipartisan support, we could not get 60 votes, but we had bipartisan support. We wanted to make sure our northern and southern borders were secured. That was where we directed our first attention with our legislation.

We also recognized that all over the country there are issues relating to the need for temporary workers. There are people who would say: Well, why would someone from Nevada be concerned about temporary workers?

Well, the Presiding Officer comes from a State where agriculture is big. But agriculture in certain parts of the State of Nevada is big. We are the largest producer of white onions in America; we produce the largest amounts of garlic, and, of course, huge amounts of alfalfa.

With corn being used so much as it is for the production of alternative fuel, alfalfa is becoming a very high-quality, very important product. So we need temporary workers in the farm communities throughout Nevada, but we also need them, on occasion, with our resort industry.

So, No. 1, secure our borders, north and south. No. 2, we need to take a look at guest workers, not in Nevada but the whole country. There is a need to take a look at them.

Thirdly, our legislation said what are we going to do with the 11 or 12 million people who are here who are undocumented? Our legislation directed toward that, was it amnesty? Of course not. But what it did was set up a process that people who were in the country who were undocumented could come out of the shadows. Would they go to the front of the line? Of course not. They would go way to the back of the line.

After having paid penalties and fines, learned English, stayed out of trouble, paid taxes, it seems quite fair, after some 13 years or 14 years, they would be able to have their status readjusted. It is important we do that. It is very clear we cannot deport 12 million people. I am not sure—maybe some want to do that, but I think, realistically, that is not part of what this country is about.

Finally, what we need to do is take a look at what we did in 1986; that is, we established a new setup for immigration, and it was where we would have employer sanctions; we shifted it from the Government to employers. So we had four basic things in our immigration legislation: Border security, temporary workers, path to legalization, and do something about employer sanctions that was more meaningful.

This was a good, strong piece of legislation. There were other things in that. But those were the four main parts. So I would hope this legislation, which was supported by the President, is legislation we could move forward on at some time.

Everyone has a right to offer whatever legislation they wish to offer. I acknowledge that. But I would think that rather than trying to piecemeal this legislation with little bits and pieces here, as everyone knows, if anything to do with immigration comes to the floor, other people who are concerned about certain aspects of border security—temporary workers, pathway to legalization, employer sanctions—would offer amendments.

The difficulty we have had getting bills to the floor and having legislation proceed has been very difficult. So I wanted everyone to know this legislation which was brought to the Senate today, and as I repeat, with great fanfare, big press events, if people want to do something about legislation on immigration, I do not think this is the right way to go. I hope the American public sees this for what it is.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

AMT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for the last few days, I have come to the floor to propose a number of potential remedies Congress could employ to

address the current housing downturn; remedies aimed at helping those who are struggling most and at creating new opportunities for others.

In this economy, Congress certainly has a role to play. And that role is to help those in urgent need, while at the same time taking a longer view of the economy and its future strength.

Taxes are an area where Congress can clearly play a helpful or a harmful role. So the debate over the looming AMT tax, which is set to hit millions of middle-class Americans with an average tax hike of about \$2,000 this year, is extremely important.

Last year, at a time when there was less concern about the economy overall, both parties agreed that a tax which was never meant to hit the middle class should be blocked. More than 170,000 families in my State are in danger of being hit with the AMT tax this year.

Nearly 900,000 taxpayers in Florida are in danger of getting hit by it. It is about the same number in Texas and Illinois, and Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. In Ohio, nearly 900,000 taxpayers are expected to get hit. And then there is New York and California. In New York, more than 3 million families are in danger of getting hit with the AMT this year, and in California nearly 4½ million families and individuals are in danger of being stuck with this tax.

Last year, Republicans insisted that if we were going to protect people from a tax they were never meant to pay in the first place, this meant not raising some other tax on them somewhere else. Senate Democrats came to share that view as well.

This year, Senate Democrats wisely opted in their budget resolution to take the same approach that prevailed last year: No new taxes, no new taxes to cover the AMT patch.

House Democrats, on the other hand, have opted for a different approach. They want to raise taxes by more than \$60 billion to pay for the AMT. And they want to do it by circumventing the legislative process. They should know from the outset that Senate Republicans will oppose this stealth and unfair tax hike, and we fully expect it will fail.

As the Chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator CONRAD, has said: Raising taxes to pay for the AMT is "not the will of the Senate."

Republicans stood strong for two basic principles last year when it came to the budget: The tax burden is already too high for working families and the businesses that create jobs in this country. And spending needs need to be kept in check to the President's top line.

We not only insisted on these principles, we fought for them. And on behalf of the American taxpayer, we prevailed. I have no doubt we will have similar success this year.

Republicans fought hard for fiscal discipline last year at a time when the

economy was not the central concern of the American people. At a time when it is the central concern of the American people, we cannot be talking about raising taxes by tens of billions of dollars. We need to be expanding the family budget, not the Federal budget. The House should know that in this economy, this is a principle Senate Republicans will defend aggressively.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. McCASKILL). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Mr. SCHUMER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OBSTRUCTIONISM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, today I am here to talk about the obstructionism across the aisle and how it is hurting our country, preventing progress, preventing change at a time when Americans demand change. This chart says it all: 73 Republican filibusters and counting.

The Republican Party, Leader MCCONNELL, and others have pointed out that a handful of the filibusters may have been started by Democrats. We can look at the circumstances of those. Maybe those were done because there was no choice, because somebody else was delaying in another way. But let's say there were 10 of these that are Democratic. Then we will change this number from 73 to 63. It is still overwhelming. It is still the record.

The point we are making is very simple: This Republican minority, unable to put forward its own agenda, unable because they are not in sync with America, can only obstruct. If you had a single word to describe the tenor of the Republican minority this year and last year, this session of Congress thus far, it would be "obstruct." If you needed two words, it would be "obstruct, obstruct." If you needed a few more words, it would be "obstruct, obstruct, and then obstruct again; get in the way."

Admittedly, this body was designed, in the wisdom of the Founding Fathers, to be the cooling saucer. This body is supposed to take a careful look and slow things down. But there are times when history demands change. There are times when the minority has understood that, and even though they would modify the way change occurs, they don't stand in the way and just say no. This is one of those times.

Technology has changed our world. It is not the same world it was even 10 or 15 years ago.

Technology has created terrorism. Why? Small groups of bad people have been enabled by technology to strike at New York or London or Madrid and innocent civilians.

Technology has created one global labor market in so many different areas. It means the kids in the schools of New York or Arkansas or Missouri have to compete with the kids at schools in Berlin and Beijing and Bangor. It means that jobs are competing. It used to be New York State would compete with Connecticut and New Jersey and Pennsylvania and Missouri and Arkansas. Now we compete around the globe. That is technology, nothing else.

Technology has allowed us all to live longer. Praise God. The average life expectancy goes up and up and up. I have a Dad who is 84. He plays golf. Thirty years ago, a man 84 was rare, and when someone was 84, they were old and frail. My dad, who led a hard life—so happy he now has a nice, happy life—is active. He drives all around, argues with my mother about how far he can drive, and all of that.

We live longer, but that creates new strains on us as well. What about health care for our elderly people? The costs go up, and every one of us would give our right arm to see our mother or father have another good year of health, or husband or wife or child. It means pensions and what we do with later-life changes. It also means we live longer and things get stretched out. People get married later. They are not in a rush to get married and have a family. They find careers later. They experiment. In the day when you had to just get a job quickly—a lot of people don't do that anymore. So it has changed that.

Technology has even changed little things. Our parents felt very much in control of us. I would get home at 3 o'clock from grade school, and I would go out on my street to play. It was baby boom time. There were 50, 60 kids. We played all kinds of games and ran around. These days, more likely, the children stay home. They are on the Internet. Lord knows what they are seeing. It is a different world.

Technology has changed everything, and technology demands that the U.S. Government help people adjust to that technology so they can continue to have the great American life. That is what America is demanding—change. Look at the polls. They are unprece-

ented. How many people think our country, under George Bush's leadership, is moving in the right direction? A smaller and smaller percentage. How many people think we need significant change? A larger and larger percentage. We can argue about what that change should be, but change we must or our children and even ourselves in later years will not have the same good life we have today.

We on the Democratic side are seeking to bring about some of that change. Some of it is quite large—change the course of the war in Iraq, change our health care system, change our energy policy. Some of it is smaller but important.

What do we face from the other side? The word "no" and the word "no" again and the word "no" again. Using the Senate rules, which allow them to require 60 votes on even the smallest measures, they have slowed everything down. Again, the exact number is not the point; it is that they have set the record. Republican filibusters are rampant. A few of these are ours, many are theirs. They will get to 73 soon, I assure you.

Why do they do it? I will tell you why. I try to study history a little bit. I am hardly a Ph.D. in history, but I like to read about it, think about it. There are times when there is a paradigm shift in our politics. The year 1980 was one such time. Most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle came in in that 1980 Ronald Reagan paradigm: strong security, shrink government, family values. Those were very attractive. Now the times have changed. The old way doesn't work. But their base—20 percent of the electorate but half, maybe more, of the Republican base—is stuck in that old world. So they have one foot in one camp. They see where the public is, but they can't move. Their base and their inability to break with that base have them paralyzed. So there is only one choice—obstruct, say no. When you can't say yes about anything, say no. That is what they have done—63, 65, 67, 68, 69. Again, we are busy calculating how many, but it is a whole lot, and it is a record.

Let me talk about one example, the housing crisis. Our economy is heading south. The numbers are not good. Unemployment is going up. Job creation is meager, anemic almost. The amount of income people have is declining, and expenses are going up. Just to continue to buy energy—oil, gas, heating oil—food, with prices that have gone through the roof because of energy in part, eats up all of most average families' extra income. So our economy is hurting.

What is at the bull's-eye of that economic downturn? It is housing, all kinds of problems. Again, the old philosophy, Reagan philosophy—don't regulate these new mortgage brokers—has led to a disaster. The banks were pretty regulated. They are not to blame in this crisis by and large, the initial