

against growing Government, growing spending, and growing taxes.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip is recognized.

DELAYING TACTICS IN THE SENATE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to yield to the majority leader when he comes to the floor, which could be momentarily. But I would like to, if I may, in morning business, address an issue which I think goes to the heart and soul of what the Senate is all about. One hundred men and women come together in this Senate, two from each State, to be part of a rich tradition in the history of this country, part of a national debate about the issues that are timely and important. It is an opportunity for the American people, through us, to have a voice and actually speak to these issues.

Unfortunately, time and again, this voice has been silenced, delayed by tactics from the minority side of the aisle.

I see the majority leader is here. I am going to yield to him at this point. I know he wanted to make the opening statement in morning business.

I yield to the majority leader.

FILIBUSTERS AND DELAYS IN THE SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I extend my appreciation to my good friend, the senior Senator from the State of Illinois.

Today is April 15. It is a big, red-letter day for people because it is the last day to file your income tax returns. As we send in our taxes—and some, as will happen tonight, will wait in line to file their tax returns—it is a good time to give thought to the economic state of our families and our economy, generally.

Since President Bush took office, the cost of gasoline has gone up more than 100 percent, more than doubled. The cost of home heating has skyrocketed. The price we pay for groceries has never been higher.

The head of the World Bank said, 3 days ago, that 31 countries will be in desperate need of food within a matter of months, and there could be riots in those countries. We are very fortunate in America, we don't have a shortage of food. But people are having trouble paying for the food they would like to eat. The same is true for health care, for prescription drugs—for college tuition. At the University of Nevada, we have a new law school. I was happy to see in the latest rankings it came out ranked 78th—a new law school ranked 78th in the Nation. That is remarkable. They have done such a good job.

But they also announced they are going to double the tuition at that new small law school—double the tuition. The cost of going to State institutions is going up. Why? Because the economies of our States are so desperately

bad. In the State of Nevada, because of the downturn in the economy, the Governor, with the State legislature, has had to cut almost \$1 billion in programs that are there in the State—road construction, new buildings, new programs—and cutting some of the old programs. Of course, they have a program to let prisoners out of our prisons more quickly, not because it is good for the people of the State of Nevada but because they are desperate for money.

We are paying record prices for nearly everything. Yet the average household income has dropped. American families are earning less and paying more. The Republican answer, for 7 years, has been to slash taxes for the ultrawealthy, to side with big business, oil companies, utility companies, and let the little guy fend for himself.

We have worked hard, as the Democratic Party—first in the minority, now in the majority—to cut taxes for the middle class, to end the dependence on oil that keeps our gas and heating bills sky high, to make health care and college tuition more affordable for families. We have now tried for days to quickly pass a highway bill that takes care of some of the problems we had in the massive bill we had before. There are corrections we would like to make on that. Last Thursday evening, the distinguished assistant leader was on the floor, as was the assistant leader for the Republicans. We talked about: Why are we having another filibuster on this? My friend, the junior Senator from Arizona, said: Oh, there will be no filibuster on this, everything is going fine—words to that effect. We had to vote last night to invoke cloture, and rather than being able to legislate on the bill, we are talking on the bill, stalling, wasting time.

We could have started on this legislation Thursday night. We could have legislated all day yesterday and all day today. But, no, we are not going to be able to do that. We are going to use the full 30 hours.

This is a number—it is probably higher than this, but let's assume this is right. The last time we came out and said there were 70-plus filibusters, they came out and said: Oh, no, not that many, not that many. So say 65, for purposes of this discussion.

In the history of this country previously—and I am going to use leader time, not morning business time, Mr. President, during my presentation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has that right.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the entire history of the country, no matter what has been going on in this country—and we have been through some difficult times—the most filibusters we ever had were 61 or 62 during a 2-year period of time, during an entire Congress. But now, in the first year of this Congress, they broke that record—stalling, slowing things down so we cannot legislate the people's business. That is because they are protecting the status quo.

Can you imagine filibustering a bill that is correcting technical mistakes made by the two Houses in passing this legislation previously? They are filibustering that—commas, semicolons, dotting an "i," crossing a "t," that is what we are doing, that is what this legislation is all about, technical corrections—supported by the ranking member, Senator INHOFE, and the chairman, Senator BOXER. They are filibustering this, making us use all the time.

Some may ask why they are doing this. The main reason is they are protecting the status quo. Time after time, Republicans seemed intent on obstruction only for obstruction's sake. They pursued this course on legislative matters large and small. It doesn't have to be, as they have done many times, stopping us from moving forward on matters relating to Iraq—many times. Let's consider that a big issue. But let's consider what we are doing today a small issue—technical corrections on a bill.

Look what is going on in the country today. Look what is going on in the world today. We listen to the news or find it in the newspaper. Today in Iraq—scores of people killed in Iraq. Bombs here, bombs there, two American soldiers killed in Iraq yesterday. We have learned 2.7 million people are displaced in Iraq. That is Iraqis. The population is only 25 million people to begin with and 2.7 million of them are wandering around trying to find a place to live in Iraq. About 3 million have left the country. They have blocked us from doing anything about that.

We had General Petraeus talk about what is going on in Iraq. He didn't answer the question: Are we any safer now than we were before this Iraq war started, before the surge started? No answer to that. When are we going to get our troops home? No answer to that. They have even gone forward on tactics delaying matters on legislation they ultimately came to support—stalling for time.

The most unfortunate aspect of Republican strategy is real people suffer because of it. Why do I say that? There are a lot of things we need to do as a country. We have, now, a big merger that took place making big business even bigger. Delta Airlines has joined with Northwest. They will have 75,000 or 80,000 employees. Now there is talk of United joining with other companies. We have heard Southwest Airlines—they were flying airplanes that were in bad shape, but they did it anyway.

We have learned in recent weeks the Federal Aviation Agency is protecting the airlines and not the consumer. We have a bill we need to do, FAA reauthorization. We need to do that bill. We would like to bring up that bill, but we cannot because we are being stalled on a technical corrections bill—only stalling for time.

Veterans health care—Senator AKAKA has asked for months: Why