

In my remaining time in the Senate, I will continue to encourage my colleagues in Washington to invest in STEM education. It is true we have our partisan problems in Washington these days, but I believe there is bipartisan consensus on the value of promoting STEM education.

Support for STEM education is essential for our economic growth and recovery. It is the future of our workforce. It is our children's and our grandchildren's future.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

FAA AIR TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENT ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 1586, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House message on H.R. 1586, motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 1586 with an amendment, an act to modernize the air traffic control system, and so forth and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid (for Murray) amendment No. 4567 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill), in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 4568 (to amendment No. 4567), to change the enactment date.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 4569 (the instructions on motion to refer), to provide for a study.

Reid amendment No. 4570 (to the instructions (amendment No. 4569), of the motion to refer), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 4571 (to amendment No. 4570), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, would the Chair let me know when I have consumed 9 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you very much.

The Presiding Officer is a distinguished former Governor, and I am a

former Governor. I suggested during the health care debate that anyone who voted for the new health care law ought to be sentenced to go home and serve as Governor for 8 years under the new law and try to make it work. People thought I was kidding. I was serious. The vote we are about to have this afternoon is another symptom of the same problem.

Here is what the vote today, which is characterized as being about teachers and Medicaid, actually does. It is a \$10 billion bailout to help States pay teachers, but it ties the Governors' hands so a Governor can't change education funding levels if their State budgets are in trouble, which almost every State is.

Second, there is \$16 billion for States to pay for Medicaid—the Federal program that is a combination of Federal money and State money—but, again, this ties the Governors' hands so Governors can't adjust the State Medicaid programs in a way that will make it possible for them to afford to continue to run the program. In other words, if you are the Governor of Tennessee, because of receiving this money or the stimulus money earlier, your ability to change benefits is limited and, in some cases, taken away.

Third, what we are about to vote on this afternoon raises taxes by about \$10 billion to help pay for these proposals. This \$10 billion in permanent tax hikes is on American multinational companies. That sounds like: Well, let's stick it to the company. But these are companies which employ 22 million Americans, according to the National Association of Manufacturers. This makes it harder for those companies to continue to employ people in the United States and it gives them more incentive to send jobs overseas.

Then there is the additional offset to this bill of \$3 billion in military and veterans funding cuts and, as the Senator from Kentucky has pointed out, these are very broad cuts, and there is nothing to keep these cuts from being made from the operation and maintenance of the fighting men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Then the fourth problem with this vote this afternoon is it adds to the debt nearly \$5 billion.

The fifth problem is we are already spending—41 cents out of every dollar we spend today is borrowed from someone, creating a serious deficit problem. There is sometimes back and forth about who caused the problem, but the solution to a boat with a hole in it is not to shoot another hole in the boat and have two holes or three holes, and that is what we would be doing with this bill.

We would be extending the so-called fiscal cliff in the States by tying the Governors' hands so they don't do what they normally would do in down times such as this, which is reduce spending so they can make their way through it. We are raising taxes on companies in a way that could send jobs overseas. We

are adding to the debt. Those are all the things we are being asked to vote on this afternoon.

One might say that is a partisan comment I am making in describing the situation. I don't think so. I think it is the comment of someone with a background as Governor of a State who has consistently struggled with Washington's irresistible impulse to impose on States rules from Washington that may not fit States.

For example, the education money—the \$10 billion—has five strings on it. No. 1, we have to keep spending on K-12 education at least as high as last year's money.

Again, that sounds good, but if you are a State that is reducing and has less revenue, you have to reduce costs or you will have fiscal cliff after fiscal cliff. The same with Medicaid—\$16 billion more for Medicaid but, again, with restrictions on what States can do to change benefits. So, as a result, Governors and legislatures that have less State revenues continue to increase their spending on Medicaid. But guess what. Not on other programs such as public colleges and universities.

I am absolutely convinced the health care law and the new costs being tacked onto States to pay for an expansion of Medicaid is going to irreparably damage our public colleges and universities. It is going to hurt their quality because the money that should be going to colleges and universities is going to go to help pay for Medicaid requirements imposed from Washington.

Who else is going to be hurt? The students. I am sure the students protesting at the University of California the over 32 percent tuition hikes have no idea the reason they are having the hikes is because Washington keeps imposing new costs on State Medicaid Programs, causing Governor Schwarzenegger and the California Legislature to take money that otherwise most likely would have gone to the University of California and spend it instead on Medicaid.

Let me give a bipartisan twist to what I just said. There was a Wall Street editorial, written by Richard Ravitch in January of this year. He is the Democratic Lieutenant Governor of New York State. This is the way he describes this scenario we are being asked to vote on this year:

The Federal stimulus has provided significant budget relief to the states—

Mr. President, that was the money that was passed in the beginning of 2009 to try to create new jobs, which apparently hasn't worked so well since unemployment is still very high. He says:

But this relief is temporary and makes it harder for states to cut expenditures.

Just as this vote this afternoon will do so.

In major areas, such as transportation, education, and health care, stimulus funds come with strings attached. These strings prevent states from substituting federal money for state funds, require states to spend minimum amounts of their own funds,