

to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT AARON B. CRUTTENDEN

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life and heroic service of SGT Aaron B. Cruttenden. Sergeant Cruttenden, assigned to the 27th Engineer Battalion, based in Fort Bragg, NC, died on November 7, 2010, of injuries sustained when his dismounted patrol encountered small arms fire. Sergeant Cruttenden was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. He was 25 years old.

A native of Mesa, AZ, Sergeant Cruttenden earned his graduate equivalency diploma and worked for 2 years as an apprentice electrician. He then enlisted in the Army in March 2008. Sergeant Cruttenden hoped to defend his country, make a better life for his family, and pursue opportunities for higher education. He served a tour of duty in Afghanistan with decoration.

During his 2½ years of service, Sergeant Cruttenden distinguished himself through his courage, dedication to duty, and willingness to take on one of the most dangerous and skillful jobs in the Army—detecting and eliminating improvised explosive devices. Throughout Sergeant Cruttenden's time in the Army, family members recall that his foremost concern was protecting the men and women under his command.

Sergeant Cruttenden worked on the front lines of battle, serving in the most dangerous areas of Afghanistan. He is remembered by those who knew him as a consummate professional with an unending commitment to excellence. His family remembers him as a dedicated son and loving father to his young daughter. Both in service and civilian life, Sergeant Cruttenden's warmth and caring for others were always on display.

Mark Twain once said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time." Sergeant Cruttenden's service was in keeping with this sentiment—by selflessly putting country first, he lived life to the fullest. He lived with a sense of the highest honorable purpose.

At substantial personal risk, he braved the chaos of combat zones throughout Afghanistan. And though his fate on the battlefield was uncertain, he pushed forward, protecting America's citizens, her safety, and the freedoms we hold dear. For his service and the lives he touched, Sergeant Cruttenden will forever be remembered as one of our country's bravest.

To Sergeant Cruttenden's entire family—I cannot imagine the sorrow you must be feeling. I hope that, in time, the pain of your loss will be eased by

your pride in Aaron's service and by your knowledge that his country will never forget him. We are humbled by his service and his sacrifice.

IRAN

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to speak in relation to the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010 and to congratulate my colleagues on its unanimous passage. This legislation is vital not only to sanction Iran for bad behavior but to signal to the Government of Iran our determination to keep them from developing or acquiring nuclear weapons and from supporting terrorism throughout the Middle East region and around the world.

It did not have to be this way. Iran has been given every opportunity to change its ways and has chosen not to do so. Iran represents one of the biggest threats to our security, and these sanctions should help restrict Iran's ability to operate.

Specifically, this legislation will expand sanctions on foreign companies that do business in Iran. It will ban U.S. banks from conducting financial transactions with foreign banks that are connected to the Iranian nuclear program or Iran's terrorist enterprises.

It imposes a variety of new financial sanctions on Iran, limiting the mullahs' access to the international banking system. And, among other provisions, provides a framework for U.S., state, and local governments to divest their portfolios of foreign companies that work in the Iranian energy sector.

In the past, the United States has not fully utilized its sanctions authority when it comes to Iran. Obviously, enforcement is crucial. Sanctions are only effective when they are actually applied. I urge the administration, in the strongest terms possible, to make full use of the sanctions Congress has authorized in this bill.

It is no secret that Iran is openly hostile to the United States and our important allies, and failing to act would be foolish and irresponsible. The Government of Iran has rejected every opportunity to develop good relations with the rest of the world and sanctions are a logical and necessary response.

We must send a strong, unified message to Tehran and to those who aid their tyrannical ambitions. Terrorism, oppression, and subjugation ought not have any place in society. This legislation imposes financial sanctions and travel restrictions on human rights abusers in Iran. Passage of this legislation helps demonstrate that we reject the repression of the rulers in Tehran and support the efforts of the Iranian people to change their government.

And, I hope that the people of Iran will understand that is our goal here. We support the people of Iran. We support their right to chose their own leaders and chart their own future. We stand with them against the tyranny of the mullahs.

Iranians have a long and proud history, and are some of the most passionate and courageous people I have met. They are just as opposed to the actions of the Iranian regime as we are.

In fact, a little over a year ago, the people of Iran went to the polls to vote for a leader and saw their hopes for a democratically elected leader brutally crushed by a regime unwilling to cede its power. People around the world stood breathlessly, hoping the brave men and women of the Green Revolution would see their efforts rewarded.

Instead of listening to the people of Iran, Ahmadinejad and his cronies killed, imprisoned, and tortured those who were brave enough to speak out in opposition to tyranny.

Unfortunately, this violent course of action is not a recently developed tactic. To this day, there are members of the Green Revolution sitting in prison. Christians are killed for worshiping the God of their choosing, the free press has been silenced, women are brutally oppressed. The human rights abuses of Iran are extensive.

These sanctions are necessary because of the terrible nature of the regime. The rulers in Tehran have demonstrated that they cannot be trusted. They have subverted the interests of the Iranian people. They have manipulated the political process.

We in the United States of America have a duty to stand with the thousands of men and women in Iran who long for the basic rights that we in America take for granted. Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of the press. These are the things the Iranian people long for, and these are the things I am confident they will one day enjoy.

Obviously, freedom for the Iranian people will require much more than legislation from the U.S. Congress, but we ought to do what we can, and this bill sends a strong signal at a key time for our efforts to halt Iran's nuclear program and for the people of Iran who seek a more representative government. I hope we take additional steps to support the Iranian people's free and unfettered access to the internet, boost their ability to receive unbiased news and information and provide the support and assistance they need to sustain the reform movement in the face of a hostile and repressive government.

Senator CORNYN and I have introduced the Iran Democratic Transition Act, which supports the transition to a freely elected democratic government in Iran by assisting eligible Iranian democratic opposition organizations with communications and distribution of information. It is an important bill to aid the courageous people of Iran, and it is my hope that in the coming weeks the Senate will be able to bring this bill to the floor for a vote.

Today is a great step forward. I look forward to working with my colleagues on other ways that we can strengthen

opposition to the regime, halt the development of nuclear weapons, and support the Iranian people's drive for freedom.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am necessarily absent for the vote today on the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, S. 510. If I were able to attend, I would have supported the motion to proceed to the bill.

NEED FOR BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION OF TAX ISSUES

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the need for Congress to resolve an issue of importance to millions of Americans: specifically, the need for a bipartisan agreement on taxes.

As the end of the year approaches, Americans face an extraordinary level of uncertainty regarding a number of tax issues: the 2001/2003 tax cuts, including the tax rates on dividends and capital gains, the alternative minimum tax, the estate tax, and last but not least, the extension of many expiring tax provisions affecting individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and even members of the U.S. Armed Forces. During this lameduck session, Congress and the White House have an opportunity to work together to develop a package that addresses all of these.

In my view, we should not be raising taxes on any business or individual during a fragile economic recovery. The private sector—this country's job creation engine—continues to struggle, lacking the required stability and confidence needed to expand and hire new workers. Individuals, in turn, have been significantly impacted, further inhibiting economic growth. Uncertainty is a major factor, and one way to reduce uncertainty is to lock down our tax policy for the next few years, giving taxpayers a clear sense of what to expect as we enter 2011.

On the tax extenders, I bring to the Senate's attention a letter just sent to Congress today from over 1,200 organizations located around the country. These are businesses, nonprofit organizations, and organizations representing our men and women in uniform. It points out the crucial nature of the expiring provisions, and asks Congress to extend them before the end of the year. This is a remarkable letter. We often hear from the business community about the importance of tax extenders for job creation, but here we have not only the business community speaking up, but also affordable housing organizations, community development organizations, and the National Education Association and the National Science Teachers Association. The letter is signed by the Alliance to Save Energy and numerous renewable energy organizations. It includes the Association of the United States Navy and the Re-

serve Officer Association. It includes agricultural organizations and technology councils.

In short, this is a statement from a breadth of organizations which do not often work together. I think we have to take this kind of letter very seriously and consider its message carefully. And its message is that these provisions are very important to millions of Americans, and that our failure to extend them could have a significant dampening effect on the economy. And I also want to be clear about something: this should be a "clean" extension of these policies—we shouldn't be raising taxes on other businesses at the same time and thereby blunting the impact of this important action for the economy.

One of the best known of the extenders is the R&D tax credit. It actually expired at the end of 2009, so America's innovative companies—many of them with operations in Massachusetts—have been wondering all year if Congress is going to reinstate the most visible public policy that encourages new ideas and technologies in this country. This is an area where our commitment should not be in doubt.

There are incentives for the production of domestic alternative energy sources and energy efficient products such as hybrid vehicles, energy efficient appliances, homes, and windows. Without these incentives, many producers will not be able to make these products. In fact, many have already discontinued operations in the absence of credits which expired at the end of 2009. The deductions for donations of funds, property, food, and equipment to charities is also hanging in the balance of this package.

There is the deduction for State and local sales taxes. Think about individuals losing the ability to deduct State and local taxes from their Federal taxes. There is the deduction for teacher classroom expenses. Teachers spending their own money for their classrooms is more common than we like to think about, and the least we can do is allow them to deduct those expenses from their tax bill. There is the credit for employers who continue to pay employees while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. This is an important support mechanism for our men and women in uniform, and we should ensure that it remains in place. These are just a few of the tax provisions which have expired or will soon expire. I invite my colleagues to review the Joint Tax Committee's list of the expiring provisions. It is crucial for Congress to act this year to extend as many of them as possible.

Ultimately, I believe we need to reform our Tax Code to lower tax rates and broaden the base. I know Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY have already begun that process with a Finance Committee hearing on tax reform earlier this year, and I salute them for starting that conversation. We look forward to working on such a package of reforms on a bipartisan basis in the

112th Congress, but for now, extending the expiring provisions should be a top priority for the remainder of this Congress.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the November 16 letter from over 1,200 organizations from around the country to which I referred.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NOVEMBER 16, 2010.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS: The undersigned represent millions of individuals, businesses, organizations and members of the U.S. Armed Forces. We urge Congress to pass legislation in the lame duck session to extend critical tax provisions that, while temporary in nature, are critical to our economy. It is of the utmost importance to all of us, and to the health of the U.S. economy, that this extension be enacted before the end of the year and apply seamlessly, at least through 2011.

Expiration of many of these provisions has already caused job losses, and the uncertainty around their extension will lead to further dislocations just as the fragile economic recovery is beginning. We all look forward to working with you on this issue in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

(Signed by over 1,200 organizations)

NATIONAL SURVIVORS OF SUICIDE DAY

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, each November we set aside a day of healing for those who have lost someone to suicide. I rise today to again recognize Saturday, November 20 as National Survivors of Suicide Day. In 1999, a Senate resolution created this annual event through the efforts of Senator HARRY REID who lost his father to suicide. This year, on November 20, over 270 conferences will take place in the U.S. and around the world to allow survivors of suicide the opportunity to connect with others who have experienced the tragedy of suicide loss and to allow for healing interactions.

The importance of this day is amplified by the shocking statistics on suicide—suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States. Nationwide, approximately 90 lives are lost to suicide each day and over 34,000 die by suicide each year. Suicide is truly an epidemic that devastates thousands of families in the United States each year.

In my State of South Dakota, one suicide occurs every 3 to 4 days and 107 lives are lost each year. These statistics place South Dakota among a group of Western States that consistently has a higher rate of suicide than the rest of the country. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among all South Dakotans and is the second leading cause of death of South Dakotans between the ages of 15–34. Suicide among American Indians in South Dakota is of particular concern—the suicide rate for American Indians ages 15–34 is more than three times higher than the national average and the suicide rate for