

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BINGAMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

SCAPEGOAT POLITICS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we have heard a lot from our friends on the other side this week about the middle class, and that is because their policies have been so ineffective in helping the middle class.

They are trying to distract the American people from their record. It is that simple. This is what those in power often do when their policies don't work. They search for a target, and the targets Democrats have decided on are Republicans and small business owners, our Nation's leading job creators, which is, of course, ridiculous.

All of this finger-pointing is doing nothing to create jobs. It is a total waste of time.

This morning, we learned unemployment is now at 9.8 percent, even higher than last month, and Democrats are responding with a vote to slam job creators with a massive tax increase.

Millions of out-of-work Americans don't want show-votes or finger-pointing contests. They want jobs.

Americans don't want to see meaningless theatrics in Congress. They want us to do something about the economy. The single best thing we can do is to tell small businesses across the country they are not going to get a tax hike next month.

These are the folks that create the jobs that every one of us claims is our first priority. Why in the world would we do something that makes them less likely to create those jobs?

Our friends on the other side know all this just as well as Republicans do, but for some reason their base is demanding that they raise taxes on small business owners.

It is the perfect way to punctuate their 2-year experiment in antibusiness, big-government policies that have only led to more joblessness, more debt, and more uncertainty.

Over the past several weeks, we have seen a growing number of Democrats begin to publicly disagree with their own leadership on the wisdom of scapegoat politics in a time of recession.

We saw this in a vivid way yesterday, when so many Democrats in the House defected from their leadership on the show-vote Speaker PELOSI held over there.

And we have seen it here in the Senate, where a number of Democrats have told their constituents that, no, of course they won't raise taxes in the middle of a recession.

They know as well as Republicans do that raising taxes—on anybody—is counterproductive in a fragile economy like ours. And they have said so.

One of our Democrat colleagues even went on "Good Morning America" and said he would extend the current rates "for everyone." So we fully expect these Democrats to keep their word and vote against proposals that do anything less.

These votes are a purely political exercise at a time when Americans are looking for action.

And here is all the proof we need: The author of the plan to raise taxes on anybody who earns more than a million dollars a year has openly admitted that the only rationale for that figure is that it sounds better—that it is the best way to send a message that Republicans are bad.

How about forgetting who looks good and who looks bad and start thinking of what is good and what is bad for working Americans?

These votes are an affront to millions of people struggling to find work.

What these votes say is that Democrats care more about doing harm to their political adversaries than doing good for middle class Americans struggling to find a job.

We don't help the middle class by punishing job creators; we hurt them.

We make it harder for them to find jobs. We make it harder to revive the economy.

We have now had more consecutive months of 9 percent unemployment than at any time since the Great Depression. And Democrats would rather play games than do something about it.

It should go without saying that Americans have had enough of this.

It is time to get serious. It is time to put the needs of middle class Americans above the needs of the liberal base that is demanding a show here in Congress. And that is all that this is—a show.

The left-wing might find it all very entertaining, but most Americans don't find it amusing at all. They don't want games; they want action. It is long past time we took them seriously.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MIDDLE-INCOME TAX CUTS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to support the Middle Class Tax

Cuts Act of 2010, which gives permanent tax relief to struggling American families who need it most. By extending the current rates for 98 percent of taxpayers, this bill provides the certainty and security necessary to protect working Americans, while at the same time indicating that we need help and that we ask upper income Americans to help address our growing fiscal deficits.

Make no mistake; extending current tax rates for the middle class is crucial in order to encourage economic growth. The economic turmoil of the last 3 years has left many American families cash-strapped and struggling to stay afloat. Every extra dollar is critically important. The evidence bears this out. Analysis by the Congressional Budget Office indicates that lower and middle-income taxpayers have a higher tendency to spend every dollar they earn. Consequently, by ensuring tax rates don't rise on lower and middle-income earners, we prevent a dramatic decline in consumer spending that could have a negative impact on this fragile economic recovery.

Today's job numbers are bad. They indicate we are far below what is necessary to reduce the unemployment rate. Unemployment remains persistently high—12.4 percent or over 2.2 million people in my State, California, unemployed and 9.8 percent or 15.1 million people across America unemployed. With economic growth projected to be slow in the near future, those numbers will likely not come down for some time.

America is hurting right now. Those who can should step up and help. I know of no millionaire who needs a sustained tax cut of 4.6 percent or who has asked for one. But I know several who are willing to step up and help. That is the irony of this debate.

Conversely, the evidence is extremely poor for extending tax cuts for wealthy Americans. When the CBO analyzed the number of different policies aimed at creating jobs, sustained tax cuts for the wealthy came in dead last. Interesting. On the other hand, permanently extending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy would require \$700 billion more in deficit spending. They are unpaid for.

In light of this report issued Wednesday by the President's fiscal commission, of which some of my colleagues are members, I simply cannot argue for extension of the upper income brackets.

It would be one thing if I could say the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy contributed to an era of substantial economic growth and prosperity. But here is the key: History does not support that.

In 2001, the first set of Bush tax cuts was proposed as a means of stimulating the economy as we emerged from the dot-com bubble. Of course, we were also projected to have a \$5.6 trillion, 10-year budget surplus. We all know that when President Clinton left office, he left a surplus.