

their family member can be assured that when they go to visit their loved one, they are indeed visiting their loved one. So we filed this bill, S. 3860. After we found out about these additional problems that have arisen, I now feel a sense of urgency about this.

I know my colleagues on the other side have said we are not doing any other legislation except making sure we get a tax cut for millionaires. I am hoping they will make an exception to the rule because if we do not provide adequate oversight right now, when will we? Is there a subject more important than our oversight and making sure those we should honor the most are, in fact, being treated with the kind of dignity and respect they deserve rather than just being thrown in a gravesite that says "Unknown"?

So I am going to make a motion tomorrow—we will be in session tomorrow—for unanimous consent to pass this legislation. I know I am being impatient. We are supposed to let these things sit on the calendar for months and months, and we are to hope that nobody puts a secret hold on it, and we are to get frustrated not knowing who has a hold on it or why. We have 38 members of the judiciary who have been sitting on the calendar who came out of committee unanimously. But, no, we can't take those up. We can't do anything until we do unpaid tax cuts for millionaires.

I am hoping my Republican colleagues will give the millionaires a rest tomorrow. I am hoping they will get off the case of helping the millionaires and the billionaires so we can unanimously pass this bill. That is the best we can do right now to make sure our loved ones—because they are all of our loved ones. We love the men and women who are buried at Arlington National Cemetery, from John F. Kennedy to the soldiers none of us has ever met. We love these Americans, and we need to do everything we can to make sure there is proper oversight of what is going on at Arlington National Cemetery.

So, tomorrow, I am hoping we get an exception to the edict that we got from our friends on the Republican side of the aisle. I am hoping they will allow this bill to go through by unanimous consent because, I will tell my colleagues, I am not comfortable going home for my Christmas holidays with my family until I am sure we have done everything we can for the families who lost loved ones who reached a final resting place on this Earth at Arlington National Cemetery.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The Senator from Illinois.

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

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

REMEMBERING RON SANTO

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last night, Chicago and America lost a hero. Ron Santo was a Chicago Cubs legend and an inspiration to anyone who has ever faced a tough, uphill battle in life.

During his 15-year career with the Cubs, Ron Santo batted .277 with 342 home runs and 1,331 RBIs. He was a nine-time All Star and a five-time National League Gold Glove winner. In each of four seasons, he batted .300, drove in 100 runs, and led the league in walks.

What the public didn't know for most of his career is that he lived every day with a life-threatening illness.

Ron Santo hid his diagnosis from the public for 10 years. He said he didn't want anybody to feel sorry for him. He didn't want to be held to a different standard. He wanted to be judged the same way every other ballplayer is judged—by the numbers. By that standard, Ron Santo earned his spot among the greats.

We can't know how much better he might have been if he hadn't suffered from diabetes, in an era that suppressed the long ball or maybe for a team that, God bless them, never once saw postseason action, but it doesn't matter. Simply put, Ron was the best third baseman in Cubs history and maybe in the game.

The last decade in Ron's life brought challenges that would have sidelined many others. In 2001, Ron lost the lower portions of both legs to diabetes. He earlier survived a bout of cancer and endured more than two dozen surgeries. In his later years he walked on prosthetic legs that slowed his gait but not his dedication to the Cubs or his work for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation where he served on the board of directors.

On October 3, as he had for the last 32 years, he hosted the annual Ron Santo Walk to Cure Diabetes in Chicago to raise awareness and funding for research into a cure.

Baseball may one day see a third baseman with the playing skills of Ron Santo, but it is hard to imagine that we will ever again see a ballplayer with greater love or loyalty for a city, its team, and its fans.

His broadcast partner, Pat Hughes, was quoted this morning saying: "Ron Santo absolutely loved the Cubs. The Cubs have lost their biggest fan."

But Ron Santo's love affair with the Cubs started at an early age. Born in Seattle, he watched the Game of the Week on TV and remembers a game from Wrigley Field with Ernie Banks. He said there was something about that ballpark and the Cubs fans.

When it came time to sign up, this great prospective ballplayer was offered a lot of money by a lot of clubs, but he wanted to be a Chicago Cub. He could have made a lot more money at the end of his career as well by leaving Chicago. Instead, in 1974, Ron Santo became the first player to invoke his

privilege under the league's "5-and-10 rule," declining a trade to the California Angels because he wanted to finish his career in Chicago. That kind of dedication to a team and its fans is something you hardly ever see anymore. It is something I remember fondly from my youth, and I will bet the Presiding Officer does too.

Since 1990, Ron Santo lived out his love for the Cubs as commentator in the booth, providing color commentary on WGN Radio Cubs broadcasts. Sports Illustrated writer Rick Reilly described Ron's commentary this way. He said Ron Santo "loves them Cubs like the Pooh Bear loves honey. He does not call a game, he lives it. He cheers so much that it sounds like his play-by-play partner Pat Hughes is broadcasting from Murphy's Bar."

In the words of broadcaster Pat Hughes, he "never had a better partner."

Ron Santo's boisterous 7th inning stretch renditions of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" at Wrigley Field, a tradition that he carried on after the passing of Cubs legend Harry Caray, could make anyone smile—maybe even a White Sox fan.

One other thing that I always thought was interesting. They used to joke about it. I was fortunate to be invited to go up to the broadcast booth at Wrigley Field. What a treat for a baseball fan to be up there with Ron Santo and Pat Hughes and to do an inning. I mean, if there is any psychic reward with this great job, it is that. I would study up on all the stats and all the ballplayers' names and what happened in the preceding week and think about who is coming and I would be all loaded up, and here is Ron Santo.

At this point it is instinctive. He is announcing a game and talking to people and getting ready for the next commercial and all of these things are going on, and they were kidding him constantly. There was one ongoing joke that I never knew the origin of, and it wasn't until they started writing these articles about his life that it finally came out. It seems that there was an incident that occurred on opening day in the year 2003. Ron Santo, for all his great qualities, didn't believe that an expensive toupee was necessarily worth the money. So he wore a toupee that clearly was a bargain. His toupee caught fire in the Shea Stadium press box in New York on opening day 2003 after he got too close to an overhead space heater. They kidded him about that for the next 6 years. What a good-natured man he was, to take that kidding and to just go on and say: Let's get back to the game—typical of a great fellow with a great sense of humor who doesn't take himself too seriously.

Ron Santo was considered for entry into Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame an astonishing 19 times. The last time was 2008. Sadly—wrongly, in my view—he never made it to Coopers-town. But he took that disappointment

the same way he took so many other bad breaks in life, with dignity and grace.

In September 2003, the Cubs retired Ron Santo's number, 10. It now hangs at Wrigley Field along with the numbers of former teammates Billy Williams and Ernie Banks. Ron Santo famously said that day: "This is my Hall of Fame—Wrigley Field."

But "This Old Cub" deserved more. Like his fellow Cubs whose retired numbers also hang proudly on Wrigley Field foul poles, Ron Santo should have been in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. That he never made it is the only regret he could have had about his career.

Ron Santo was a ballplayer who lived large, played through unimaginable pain, broadcast the game with all his heart, and left an indelible mark on Cubs fans everywhere. Whether he was staring down an opposing pitcher or staring down diabetes, he gave it his all every day. The Cubs, Chicago, and America will miss Ron Santo.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TAX RELIEF

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to speak about the debate we are having on the fundamental question of what type of tax relief will be considered by the Senate.

Not too often does a debate offer such clear differences in priorities between the two parties. We have before us a sensible package, put together by Chairman BAUCUS, which would ensure that any family in America who makes up to one-quarter of a million dollars in a year would get a permanent tax cut instead of one that expires a few years down the road, as the Bush tax cuts will do.

If Republicans would work with us, we could give businesses certainty, middle-class families tax relief, and create jobs at this very moment. Solving these issues has, at least from my perspective, broad bipartisan support. Everybody says they want to give business certainty, they want to give middle-class families tax relief, and they want to create jobs. So if we have that agreement, both sides should be able to come to support this proposition.

Both sides have agreed we should move forward extending tax cuts for middle-class families, do more to create jobs, and ensure that the alternative minimum tax doesn't ensnare more than 30 million Americans this year. Unfortunately, the question isn't, Who is going to cut your taxes? That is

not the question. The question is, Whose taxes are going to be cut?

We could pass this bill today, give middle-class taxpayers certainty, take care of the AMT, the alternative minimum tax problem, which protects, right now, in terms of how we have responded to it to create relief from that—and we want to extend that relief not only to 30 million people in the country but 1.6 million New Jerseyans whom we have saved from being bit by that AMT. Failure to act would mean they would pay an additional tax bill of up to \$5,600.

These are middle-class families who were never intended to pay a tax that was meant originally for those in our country who paid nothing toward the common good. Hence, the Congress created an alternative minimum tax, so those using the deductions in the code who paid nothing to the common good, to the Nation's defense, and its well-being had to pay something. But since that was 20, 25, 30 years ago, it was never indexed. We have now seen that has been biting middle-class families. In the case of middle-class families in New Jersey subject to the AMT, they would be bit by another \$5,600.

We also need to extend the desperately needed unemployment benefits to the 2 million Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. That is all in this package. We could pass a number of job creation measures, such as an extension of Build America Bonds which, true to its name, puts people to work rebuilding communities across America. My proposal is to give them the tools they need to put people to work on projects that deliver safer and cleaner water to families through private activity bonds—something that gets the private sector putting up money in a way that creates jobs. Unbelievably, my Republican colleagues have pledged to stop this bill, to do that by what we call a filibuster, to insist that instead of a simple majority of the 100 Senators, there have to be 60. All these benefits, permanent tax benefits for middle-class families making one-quarter of a million dollars or less, the opportunity to create jobs, the opportunity to take care of a couple million Americans who lost their jobs, the opportunity to bring the private sector back again, the opportunity to give the private sector certainty, none of that is good enough for them. They will not simply vote against it; they are seeking to block this bill, by using the filibuster, from even being considered by the Senate.

The difference in the priorities between our two parties is rather clear. Republicans would rather that taxes increase for all Americans than allow tax rates for millionaires and billionaires to revert to Clinton-era prosperity levels. So all of us have to face an increase in taxes in order to give an extra tax benefit to the wealthiest in our country.

It happens to be a fact that the wealthiest in the country still see a tax

cut under this bill, and it will be bigger than a middle-class family's tax cut. We are simply asking not to extend additional tax cuts on top of the tax cuts they will already receive. So everybody in America gets a tax cut under our proposal. As a matter of fact, that tax cut, instead of expiring a few years down the road, stays permanent. But, no, they want to give an additional tax cut to those who are millionaires, multimillionaires, and billionaires. Simply put, Republicans believe it is more important to deliver massive tax breaks to CEOs than to the people who work for them. They argue that millionaires paying tax rates at the levels they paid in 2000 would decimate the economy. The problem is, that position is simply not supported by the facts or the experience of the last decade.

People who have worked hard and built personal wealth should be applauded for their success. I applaud people who, through their hard work, creativity, and ingenuity, have created wealth. They should be applauded and admired. I admire them. People who work hard and prosper, they love their country too. They are in the best position to be helpful to their country in this tough economic time. Many of them are willing to contribute if we ask. We know from experience that reverting to the tax rates that the wealthiest and most successful paid during the Clinton-era prosperity will certainly not break our economy. As a matter of fact, it was that era that balanced the budget for the first time in a generation, created record surpluses, low unemployment, low interest rates, and had the greatest peacetime economy in over a generation. It certainly didn't break our economy.

So I just don't understand why my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle continue to oppose what is good for America, for our children, and for our future. We are on the eve of the holidays. Middle-class families are sitting around the kitchen table at night wondering how they are going to afford to buy the gifts for their children this year. Middle-class families are wondering how they are going to make the next mortgage payment, how they are going to pay tuition for their college-age children next semester. These are tough conversations around that kitchen table.

I can assure you those Republicans who are fighting for millionaires and billionaires are not worried this holiday season. Yet we are being asked to give them an additional tax windfall while middle-class families are struggling. Our Republican colleagues are playing Santa for the millionaires and Scrooge for the middle class.

Those who make over \$1 million, they want to give them a big fat check, averaging \$104,000, with a bow on it. For our children, they want to give them a big fat \$4 trillion bill to be paid back with interest for generations to come. I guess that is their version of happy holidays, America.