

But so far Republicans have shown no interest in meeting us halfway and have shown every intention of protecting their rich corporate friends. As this conversation continues, Democrats do not need any lectures from the other side on fiscal responsibility. Remember, we were the ones who balanced the budget during the Clinton years. We did it. We were accused of reducing the deficit too much. We were spending less money than we were taking in. Because of the work we did during the last of the Clinton administration, even President Bush, during his first year, because he got all of the largess from the Clinton administration, turned in a record budget surplus. But as soon as his policies went into effect, he changed that very quickly. In a matter of months, he turned a record surplus into a record deficit that we are fighting today.

In conclusion, any budget debate is going to be about numbers. That is the way it should be. But that is not the real priority, and those figures should not blind us to the real story behind the numbers. Our goal and our charge is not to cut billions of dollars just to say we did it. Our task is to make our government more efficient, our economy healthier, and our future more secure. Our challenge is to do so in a way that does not put our public safety at risk or break our promise to seniors.

So we need to think about what we are cutting and making sure those cuts are not counterproductive. We need to pay attention to the quality of those cuts, not just the quantity of those cuts. After all, you can lose a lot of weight by cutting off your arms and legs but no doctor would recommend it.

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#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

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#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

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#### TAA AND HCTC EXTENSION

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I thank the majority leader for his support on our upcoming efforts. I am joined on the Senate floor by Senator CASEY, the senior Senator from Pennsylvania, who has been a leader for workers in this body.

I want to make some brief comments about something very important for workers and businesses and international trade. Then Senator CASEY will make a couple of unanimous-con-

sent requests. He will make one that I hope is agreed to. If it is, then he will not need to make a second, and I will not need to make a third.

In December, just before the 111th Congress adjourned, it extended two critical trade programs which Senator CASEY and I were on the Senate floor working on. First, we extended the Andean Trade Preferences Act, thanks in part to Senator MCCAIN of Arizona. It provides assistance to Latin American countries and also helps American businesses and workers by granting access to new inputs and products.

Second, critically important to our two States, Pennsylvania and Ohio, and I know to the Presiding Officer's State of Minnesota, we extended trade adjustment assistance. That is the least we can do when this Congress passes wrong-headed trade agreements.

We extended the health coverage tax credit so that together workers who lose their jobs because of bad trade agreements, such as NAFTA and CAFTA, and bad trade positioning such as PNTR for China, can at least get some help for retraining so they can get back to work in comparably paying jobs, we hope, and get some assistance, some tax credits to buy health insurance for them and their families.

As a result, thousands of workers and retirees who depend on TAA and the HCTC made it through the holidays, when we did this in late December, at the last minute—it should not have been that long, but in the last minute—with these critical sources of support.

The Andean Trade Preferences Act has brought benefits for our businesses and workers. It is nice that sunflowers from Colombia will be in florist shops for Valentines Day next week because of this act. But the difficult reality faced by too many workers reliant on TAA, reliant on the health care tax credit, reminds us of the effects of trade and globalization, the downside of trade and globalization.

It reminds us that our actions bring consequences. We hear Presidents and Congresses trumped the advantages of free trade. Yet they forget about fair trade, what happens to too many workers. Good for investors, good for some companies, good for some countries, not always good for our workers—they forget about that.

By this weekend, if we fail to act, crucial improvements to TAA and the health care tax credit will expire. Workers again will be hurt not just by loss of jobs but loss of these benefits. It will expire at the expense of workers who played by the rules, who lost their jobs, most of their pensions, and their health care—or all three.

Just last month I visited the Mahoning Valley on the Pennsylvania border in Northeast Ohio—the Mahoning Valley One Stop to visit with workers who are using TAA to develop new skills and training to find new secure jobs. One industrial manufacture worker, I believe, in her forties

has a child, a daughter, I believe, in her late teens. She and her daughter both were in the same school studying to be health care workers, both becoming professionals, both getting their lives and their futures in order—the mother able to do it because of trade adjustment assistance.

I was there with a simple message: We cannot keep passing trade agreements that undermine Ohio workers and then turn our backs on those workers when their jobs are offshored.

The TAA and HCTC enhancements are not expensive; they are not complicated. They are modest improvements that Congress passed to programs that help tens of thousands of Americans either get back to work or regain some measure of the financial security that had been stripped unceremoniously from them.

Last week, 12 Senators and I, including the majority leader, sent House leadership a request for a long-term extension of trade adjustment assistance, the health care tax credit, and the Andean Trade Preferences Act. TAA is a critical part of our Nation's competitiveness strategy.

In the last 2 years, more than 155,000 additional trade-affected workers across the country who might not have been certified under the former TAA program became eligible for TAA benefits because a year and a half, almost 2 years ago, in the Recovery Act, we added expanded trade adjustment to help those workers who had lost their jobs because of trade.

These Americans are rubber workers from Johnson Rubber Company in Wood County. They are furniture makers from Masco in Jackson County or aluminum castings workers from Mansfield Brass and Aluminum in my home county of Richland. In addition, workers in the service industry are eligible for TAA because of these changes. Those workers include engineers at Belcan Engineering in Cincinnati and computer programmers at Electronic Data Systems in Fairborn, a suburb of Dayton. It includes researchers at the Transportation Research Center in Moraine.

In total, 360,000-plus workers nationwide have been certified eligible for TAA since 2009. These workers use TAA to acquire new skills to return to work as quickly as possible. This is not theory; this is not some game. This is workers who have lost their jobs because of decisions in this body and in the White House that cost people those jobs. And it is helping those workers so they can get back on their feet.

It is not a game; it is not a happy time. It is the least we can do for those workers. Health coverage tax credit programs also help those same trade-affected workers and retirees who lose their benefits. I could go on about this. I will stop.

I hope Republicans do not object. The combination of TAA and HCTC, trade adjustment and health care tax credit, is a winner for business. The combination is a winner for workers; it is a

winner for our economy. It will boost the economy. It is too important for the country. For decades there has been bipartisan support for the TAA program.

In 1962, President Kennedy, when this was conceived, said: Those injured by foreign competition should not be required to bear the brunt of it.

When there are no replacements for good-paying, secure jobs, TAA and HCTC are there. They help workers acquire new skills. They help businesses compete. They are keys to our Nation's economic recovery. They are keys to our competitiveness. They are, simply put, the right thing to do.

I yield to the Senator from Pennsylvania, I believe, for a unanimous consent request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—  
H.R. 359

Mr. CASEY. First, I thank Senator BROWN and others who have helped us in this battle. Just a couple of words about trade adjustment assistance as it relates to Pennsylvania and, more importantly, Pennsylvania workers.

As many people know, the trade adjustment assistance provisions were enhanced by amendments made to the program in 2009. It was updated in two critical ways. First, it expanded coverage to more workers, including service workers and workers whose jobs have been offshored to places around the world. The change was essential because it made workers whose jobs were lost to China and India eligible for assistance which these days is an essential safeguard for those workers. The amendments also increased and improved training, health coverage, and other benefits available to trade adjustment assistance certified workers.

What does that mean for Pennsylvania? The 587 certifications issued in Pennsylvania cover an estimated 67,000 workers. To give one example, General Electric announced in 2009 that they would be cutting 1,500 jobs. We have worked with them and others to get them through this period. They recently got a solution in the form of trade adjustment assistance. As a result of their certification, the workers have been able to go to school, feed their families, and contribute to the local economy. So General Electric in Pennsylvania is hiring again with the help of trade adjustment assistance.

With that by way of background, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 359, which was received from the House and is at the desk; that a Casey substitute amendment providing an 18-month extension of trade adjustment assistance and the Andean Trade Preference Act be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, reserving the right to object, the Senator's unanimous-consent request contains components he knows are controversial and opposed by numerous Senators and for that reason that proposal cannot pass the Senate today. Specifically, the proposal would extend the TAA-related provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, better known as the failed stimulus package, which most Members of this side of the aisle strenuously opposed for very sound reasons. That stimulus spent approximately \$1 trillion under the guise that it would keep unemployment rates below 8 percent. Yet nearly 2 years later, we are still at a point where unemployment rates, which had risen to the area of 10 percent, are now still at 9 percent. I am reminded this is nearly double the average annual rate of the last administration.

It would be one thing if there was clear evidence that differing TAA programs were effective in meeting these intended goals, but research suggests the efficacy of the TAA training funding is not as convincing. At the insistence of Senators COBURN and ENZI, the GAO found that in fiscal year 2009, nine Federal agencies spent approximately \$18 billion to administer 47 separate employment and job training programs, including TAA. Despite large Federal spending, GAO could not conclude whether the programs have had any meaningful benefit. The GAO report states:

Little is known about the effectiveness of the employment and training programs we identified because only 5 reported demonstrating whether outcomes can be attributed to the program through an impact study.

As a result, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, will the Senator from Wyoming yield for a question?

Mr. BARRASSO. Yes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Is he aware that 155,000 new workers have been certified, that under the new TAA program since May 2009, 155,000 Americans have been assisted under TAA?

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I would be happy to, as a matter of record, submit for the record the GAO study that was reported by Senators COBURN and ENZI to outline the entire study and the reason I am objecting today.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, if the Senator would be willing to give us more specifics, it is very important to those 155,000 workers. I know a lot of them live in Pennsylvania. I don't know how many of them live in Wyoming. I could find that out. I understand his criticism of the Recovery Act, but that is a debate for another time. I understand Senator COBURN's disagreement and perhaps his too with

worker training programs. I wish to see a better consolidation. This President is actually beginning to do that. President Bush, I don't believe, ever attempted that.

More precisely, strip away all the other discussions of the Recovery Act. Precisely what did we do that you object to when we expanded the TAA language in the Recovery Act? We have the Recovery Act in place. We have the TAA in place. We expanded TAA so that more workers could be covered, those workers who lost their jobs from trade agreements—not from trade agreements, lost their jobs from trade losses from trade, not just in countries we had free trade agreements with but other countries. We expanded it there. We also expanded it to service workers. Since you are speaking for Mr. COBURN and others, what precisely was the expansion in TAA that you objected to? This is not a debate on all the worker training programs. This is a debate on making them more efficient. We should have that debate. We should make it more efficient. This is not a debate on the Recovery Act, even though any fair-minded economist will say it is not a well-known failure. It actually worked. But that is another debate.

But precisely the expansion of TAA to cover service workers and to cover those workers who lost jobs to countries with whom we did not have an FTA, what is your objection to those, the precise specific expansion of TAA that Senator CASEY's unanimous consent is trying to expand, to continue?

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I do look forward to having those additional discussions and debates on all the issues raised by my distinguished colleague from Ohio. That is why, after the two distinguished Senators on the floor today offer the three different proposals, I have a counterproposal that I hope they would accept, an alternative package that maintains the underlying bill H.R. 359. It extends the Andean Trade Preference Act for 18 months and extends the permanent staffing prohibition for 18 months. I will be offering that after we have finished an additional discussion by the other side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I have a second unanimous-consent request which I will offer. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 359, which was received from the House and is at the desk; that a Casey substitute amendment providing for a 4½ month extension of trade adjustment assistance and the Andean Trade Preference Act be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, reserving the right to object, and for