

through good energy projects. The shortest path to more American jobs is more American energy.

Unfortunately, the President and the administration have delayed one of the largest domestic, shovel-ready projects until after the election next year. This is a project that is ready to go. The States this project would go through have cleared the way for the project. There is no government money involved. This just takes a government OK, saying: Yes, it is all right to create these jobs. These jobs not only have the short-term impact of creating the jobs that are created to build the pipeline but the long-term impact of all the economic activity that occurs because of this new North American energy to which we would have access. In delaying this program, the President is simply stalling the creation of thousands of jobs and postponing not only the growth in our economy but also a move toward more energy security.

Not too many years ago, I don't think one could say with a straight face that we need to do everything we can to create something that closely resembles energy independence. We are in a situation now with North American energy where we can do that. The numbers on the Keystone XL project speak for themselves.

This project would create 20,000 direct jobs during the construction phase—20,000 jobs. That is why the labor union movement in the country supports this project. Twenty thousand jobs to build the pipeline. It would generate \$20.9 billion in new private sector spending. It would generate around \$5 billion in new State, local, and Federal revenue when this project is being built and when this project is completed. Nationwide, the project would benefit 1,400 American job creators.

The Keystone XL project would also help reinforce America's energy security by reducing our dependence on other parts of the world. With Canada, our largest trading partner, it is a miracle relationship, this large border that we don't worry very much about, all the back-and-forth economic activity that occurs. In fact, for every \$1 we would send to Canada for that energy, they would send 91 cents back. So this is \$1 we are spending to get 91 cents back, to be more of an energy partner with our closest neighbor—we have clearly a bigger border with Canada than we do with Mexico—to be an energy partner with our closest neighbor rather than to worry about energy in places where, frankly, they don't like us very well. If they do like us, they don't get the money back to us in the same way.

In fact, by comparison, of the 91 cents we would get back for every \$1 we send to Canada for North American energy coming out of Canada, we get 49 cents back from Saudi Arabia. That doesn't mean Saudi Arabia is a bad trading partner. It just means they are not as good a trading partner as the Canadians are. We get 33 cents back

from Venezuela. So why would we want to send \$1 to Venezuela or \$1 to Saudi Arabia for energy if we could send \$1 to Canada and almost all of that \$1 comes right back to us?

Domestically, this project would help encourage more oil production in the Bakken formation in the Upper Great Plains. The Bakken formation—which I sure didn't know about 15 years ago and I don't know that anybody did—is thought to be the greatest new energy development since Prudhoe Bay in the 1960s. I read somewhere the other day that North Dakota has become the fourth or fifth energy-producing State in the country, passing Oklahoma. This is a great resource right at the incoming border of where this new pipeline and all this energy activity would be.

Regardless of the White House's decision to delay this project, the Canadian oil sands will be developed. It is not a question of whether there is going to be a market; it is who gets the market. The Canadians have said, as they should: If we don't build a pipeline through the United States to the refineries in the Southern part of the United States, we are going to build that same pipeline in another direction. Most likely, the pipeline will go to the Pacific coast and then the energy goes to Asia.

Why would we want energy going to Asia from a trading partner where we get 91 cents back rather than energy coming here? Why would we want to buy more energy from the Middle East and less energy than we could buy from our neighbor? Why would we think for a minute that the energy security of the country would be better served in any other way than this one?

So this is going to most likely go to Asia. If it doesn't go to Asia, I guess it can go to the Atlantic coast and go to Europe. But what everybody believes is, if it doesn't come here, they just turn the pipeline to the west instead of the south, and those oil sands, that great energy resource goes somewhere else rather than where it makes more sense for us to get it or more sense for them to send it.

This is as close to an energy no-brainer as I can think of. But the majority leader says this project is dead on arrival in the Senate. I don't believe he meant just dead on arrival if it was part of a package that extended the payroll tax. I think the quote was: "It is dead on arrival." It is not going to go anywhere in the coming year, at a time when we need those jobs. Eventually, we all know as quickly as we can get it, we need to be more dependent on North American energy and less dependent on energy everywhere else.

There have been many reports that say the administration's timing is in consideration for the reelection effort. This appears to be about one American job instead of more American jobs, and we need to be concerned about more American jobs.

Some reports have noted that the President's advisers "fear that a deci-

sion in favor of the project could dampen enthusiasm among volunteers needed for door-to-door campaigning in battleground States."

I thought that bus went to battleground States. That should be enough to get to battleground States. We shouldn't have to worry about not having these volunteers because we choose to do what makes sense for us in the energy situation.

Others have noted that "the President decided to punt on this project in order to placate parts of the coalition that elected him in 2008."

Americans are looking for jobs, not more of the same from Washington. This isn't time for politics. We need to jump-start the private sector economy. Again, I will say, the quickest road to more American jobs is more American energies.

For the better part of 60 years, we have used more energy than we could produce. The marketplace is there. The consumer is there. The user is there. This is what capitalism is all about. It is what free enterprise is all about, figuring out how to connect the product with the consumer. So we know the consumer is there. Let's do what we can to connect that consumer with the energy needs they have.

According to a Gallup poll, the sharp decline in the workforce last month may have more of a reflection on the large number of Americans deciding to give up looking for work. Let's do things that energize the economy and energize the American workforce.

I am glad to be a sponsor of the North American Energy Security Act. The House again pursued this week a similar policy as part of their effort to vote on a payroll tax extension, with this as an effort to create new jobs. Whether it is the Keystone Pipeline or the Utility MACT rule that slows down people's decisions to make a job-creating decision or other EPA rules and potential rules that make people think twice and three times and eventually enough times you don't do it about job creation or what we need to do to get to the oil and gas shale reserves of the country or oil in the Gulf of Mexico, let's do what is necessary for North America. Let's make North American energy work for America. I don't know a better way to do that at less government cost or less government involvement than the Keystone Pipeline.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### PAYROLL TAX CUT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise to share a feeling that many in my home

State have expressed to me. I rise to share my frustration.

It is not just the frustration you may feel, as I have felt presiding over this body, when for hours at a time it is empty, when there is such precious and important work that we can and should be doing to get the people of this great country back to work, to strengthen our national security, to lay the groundwork for a strong recovery, to deal with the hundreds of issues this body should be dealing with. I am expressing my frustration at our inability to work together and to make real progress.

Today, I have had the blessing of being visited by a number of Delawareans for lunch, for business visits, for just some constituent catchup. As I do almost every day, I commuted down from Delaware this morning. As I have heard from folks on the train, as I have heard from folks in my office, as I have heard from folks who have written and called my offices in Delaware and in Washington, they are puzzled and they are frustrated. They don't understand why we can't move forward.

To paraphrase the good Senator from Missouri who just spoke, there is a no-brainer right in front of us, and it is the extension of the payroll tax cut. It is something that at least apparently has the support of both parties in both Houses. It is something a number of economists have said is an important contributor to the modest but steady economic growth that is helping pull America out of this terrible great recession.

So I ask: Why is it we sit here stalled, unclear on when we can proceed to a vote, to a consideration of a clean payroll tax cut? There have been a whole series of efforts to get us to the floor for a vote to an extension of the payroll tax cut. This is a simple enough matter.

Working Americans all over this country—I believe 160 million of them—will be hit with an increase in their payroll tax rate at the end of this month, just a few days now away, unless we act. My good friend Senator CASEY of Pennsylvania has suggested several versions of a payroll tax cut that would build upon and strengthen the payroll tax cut that the President proposed and this body passed last year. The Casey compromise that has most recently been considered and debated in this body would put up to \$1,500 in the pockets of hard-working Americans all over this country and would contribute as much as 1.5 percent to GDP growth in the coming year. But in the last 2 weeks, we have seen our colleagues on the other side of the aisle four times block our efforts through filibusters and dilatory tactics to attempt to get to a payroll tax cut extension. The first Republican version was opposed by 26 Senate Republicans; the second version opposed by 25.

So on some level I have to ask, what are we doing? Since when do Republicans openly oppose tax cuts? I have

been in this Senate just over 1 year. As you know, I was sworn in last November. In my freshman year, I have seen many moments when we have been unable to reach reasonable compromise, when we have been unable to move forward, and when we have flirted with having to shut down the whole Federal Government because we couldn't reach an appropriate compromise with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. Now we, once again, stand here this Wednesday, knowing that unless we can act in partnership, we will shut down this government on Friday without a continuing resolution.

Last night, the House acted. They passed this payroll tax cut extension and sent it over to us, and I am puzzled as to why we are not moving to it on the floor today. I will tell you that when we get to move to it, I will vote against it, and I know many others here will as well. Why? Because H.R. 3630, which passed the House last night, is not just a clean extension of the payroll tax cut bill—in fact, far from it. It is loaded with a whole series of other policy riders, things that have nothing to do with the payroll tax cut extension which House leadership had to do in order to garner enough votes to move it.

Today we should be considering this bill sent to us last night, the Speaker asking us to take it up, and it has a whole series of provisions which I suspect many here and at home don't know about. I will briefly consider a few of them.

It undermines health care reform by punishing low- and middle-income families whose economic circumstances changed during the year. It cuts 40 weeks of unemployment benefits from the 99 weeks we would like to extend to 54 weeks. It overrides the President's decisionmaking process on the Keystone XL Pipeline—in my view, simply to embarrass the President—and it amends the Clean Air Act to block EPA's proposed rules on toxic air pollution from industrial boilers.

It would also freeze Federal pay through 2013 and impose a triple contribution, mandatory contribution to Federal retirement programs, effectively cutting Federal employee pay and taking more than \$53 billion out of the pockets of Federal workers.

To me, in some ways most alarmingly, it allows States to impose drug-testing requirements on employees who have lost their jobs and are seeking unemployment.

In short, what came over to us from the House last night is the furthest thing possible from a clean extension of the payroll tax cut. It is a payroll tax cut with rider after rider sitting on the back of this horse that has weighed it down so greatly, it can clearly hardly move. It is a terrible bill, and in my view we should move to it, dispose of it, and get back to the business of the country.

Last, I am puzzled as to why we are not proceeding to it. My recollection—

and I don't have the joy of sitting here on the floor all the time, but my recollection from what I read and heard is that the Republican leader has twice called on us to move to this bill. I believe he did so twice earlier this week, saying we should put partisanship aside and promptly take up whatever is sent over to us from the House by way of a payroll tax cut extension. I think I quote when I say his comment was:

I think the first thing we need to find out is whether there are the votes in the Senate to pass what the House has passed. And so I'd rather not speculate about what happens later. I'm hoping we are spending our time and energy trying to get this bill passed in the Senate, as well as in the House.

That is a perfectly reasonable attitude. We should proceed to this bill. We are here. We have the bill. We have been waiting almost literally the entire day without making any progress. We need to extend tax cuts for payrolls. We need to extend tax cuts that incentivize clean energy investments. We need to extend tax cuts that can help inspire innovation, research, and development.

There is a whole list of tax cuts that will expire at the end of this year without action. We need to pass the National Defense Authorization Act. We need to pass a continuing resolution to fund this government and the rest of this year's appropriations bills. There are so many important bills to which we must turn.

My sole question is, why, when we tried to proceed to this bill this morning, did the Republican leader object?

I am just a freshman, but I represent a State that is deeply frustrated and puzzled. Since when do Republicans load up a tax cut extension with so many riders that they are afraid to even bring it to a vote on the floor of this Chamber? I am puzzled. I am frustrated.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Wyoming.

#### THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to speak today in support of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

The Keystone XL Pipeline is one of the largest shovel-ready infrastructure projects in the United States. It would bring oil from North Dakota and from Canada to refineries along the gulf coast and in the Midwest. The pipeline would strengthen America's energy security and create tens of thousands of new jobs. These are good-paying jobs. But don't take my word for it, just consider what representatives of organized labor have had to say.

The president of the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO said:

[A]ny discussion of the Keystone XL project begins and ends with one word: JOBS.

He went on to say:

Throughout America's Heartland, the Keystone Pipeline represents the prospect for