the policy initiatives we could take would give us the biggest bang for the buck. What they told us is No. 1 would be extension of unemployment insurance. Why? Because the people who receive those benefits are most likely to spend the money. That means there would be increased demand in the economy, and that would give additional lift.

Let me be swift to add: For those who are concerned about deficit and debt, I am with you, absolutely, because our long-term threat is this growing debt. But CBO has told us in testimony before the Budget Committee there is no contradiction between taking steps in the short term to give lift to the economy and taking steps in the medium term and the longer term to rein in deficits and debt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for an additional 3 minutes.

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

Mr. CONRAD. I thank the Chair and I thank my colleagues.

This is what JPMorgan Chase has said on expiring payroll tax cut and emergency unemployment benefits:

> For 2012, the more important issue is what happens to expiring stimulus measures. . . . Together, [the payroll tax cut and the emergency unemployment benefits] have lifted household disposable income by about $150 billion this year. If they expire as scheduled, consumption growth early next year would be challenged. . . . In our baseline view, the drag from tightening fiscal policy [including expiration of the payroll tax cut and emergency unemployment benefits] could subtract 1.5%–2.0% from GDP growth next year.

Since GDP growth is only forecast at 2.5 to 3 percent, a reduction of 1.5 to 2 percent would be a dramatic reduction.

This is what Mark Zandi, the chief economist of Moody's Analytics, said:

> If policymakers do nothing here, if Congress and the administration just sit on their hands and they do nothing, the odds are very high we'll go into recession early next year. . . . We have a payroll tax holiday, all of us. . . . We'd be in recession right now without it. . . . If they don't [extend] that, at the very minimum, we'll likely go into recession.

I hope very much that colleagues are listening. I hope very much that we are able to proceed to address this matter of extending the payroll tax cut and of extending unemployment insurance.

I think I want to end as I began. If we had not had the government response in TARP and stimulus, Zandi and Blinder—two of the top economists in this country, one who was an adviser to the McCain campaign, one who was the Deputy Chairman of the Federal Reserve—have said we would be in a depression today. We would be in a depression today, with 16-percent unemployment and 8 million fewer people having jobs. We ought to pay close attention to that advice. We ought to act on it, and we ought to do it together. We ought to find a way for principled compromise on both sides.

This body is bigger and better than we are demonstrating at this hour. We have the chance to prove to the American people that we are worthy of their confidence and that we are able to respond and do the urgent business of the Nation. I hope we don't disappoint them.

I thank the Chair and my colleagues for the courtesy of the additional time, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the period for morning business be extended until 7:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. HOEVEN. I wish to begin by thanking my esteemed colleague from the great State of North Dakota. I appreciate very much his support for this important project as he has again expressed. This is something we worked on for a great length of time. It is something we have quite a bit of background and experience with, energy production and the infrastructure needs that go with it. Again, I express my appreciation to Senator CONRAD for his support of the project, and also for expressing, and I think doing so in very eloquent terms and in terms that are very much appreciated, that he feels this is something that needs to advance; that he feels as we work forward in terms of determining how to handle the payroll tax cut holiday issue, this is something that can be helpful and constructive.

I am here to speak in support of the Keystone project. You might say, Why? Why is it important that we move forward with this project? Well, first and foremost, because it is a tremendous job creator, but also because it reduces our dependence on foreign sources of oil as well as improving environmental stewardship. I want to take a minute to talk about all three aspects of the legislation.

Together with my colleagues, I put forward the North American Energy Security Act of 2011. Essentially, that legislation clears the path to move forward with the Keystone XL Pipeline project.

For those who may not be familiar with the Keystone XL Pipeline, I brought this chart that actually shows the route it travels. It is a 1,700-mile-long pipeline which runs from Alberta, Canada, down to our refineries in the gulf coast region. As you can see, it is this blue line laid out on the chart. Right next to it we have this red line. This is the Keystone Pipeline. I will take a minute to talk about that, because I think it is important in the context of what we are trying to do with Keystone XL.

Prior to being elected to the Senate, I served the State of North Dakota for 10 years as Governor. During that time, we worked with many companies to develop pipeline infrastructure in North Dakota as we produced more and more oil for this Nation, but we also worked with our neighbors from the North who provide oil to our country as well, in fact 2.2 million barrels a day, to move that product safely into our country.

The Keystone Pipeline, built by TransCanada, as you can see, tracks from Alberta, Canada, all the way down to Patoka, IL. So it is similar in that it brings Canadian crude into our refineries here in the United States, which is refined and reduces our dependence on other sources of oil. About 590,000 barrels a day flow through the Keystone Pipeline right now. So when we talk about the Keystone XL project, we are not talking about something which hasn't been done before. In fact, we just got done permitting this pipeline, which is almost identical, bringing oil from roughly the same place in Canada down to refineries into the United States. That has already been approved by EPA and the Department of State. It went through the requisite NEPA and study processes, it went through the proper processes with the Department of State, and it has been approved, 590,000 barrels a day coming into our country to reduce our dependence on oil from places such as the Middle East and Venezuela right now. So when we talk about Keystone XL, we are not talking about doing anything we haven't already done.

This pipeline—which would run a little bit to the west—again roughly starts up about the same place, Alberta, Canada, comes down further than the existing Keystone Pipeline down to our refineries. It is important to know that this isn't just about moving crude oil from Canada to the United States. This is also about moving oil within the United States.

In this part of our country, in North Dakota and in Montana, we are producing a tremendous amount of oil. My home State of North Dakota today is closing in on oil production of 500,000 barrels of oil a day. We will put 100,000 barrels a day of crude oil, such as sweet crude, into this pipeline as well. So it is not just about moving Canadian oil in America, it is about moving oil within our country, production from the Bakken region in the Williston Basin, down to our refineries.

Also, you will notice that the pipeline comes down to Cushing, OK. Right now we have a backlog of oil in Cushing, OK, and this pipeline will move oil from Cushing down to the refineries in Texas and Louisiana. So it helps solve bottleneck issues, moving oil in our country, which will help reduce prices to consumers as you eliminate some of these bottlenecks and price disparities.