

job-centered policies, amendments that deserve not just a vote but bipartisan support. For example, an amendment from the junior Senator from South Carolina would eliminate ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek rule, which is hurting Americans' take-home pay in our already depressed economy.

One of our Members from Utah is putting forward an amendment to repeal ObamaCare's job-destroying medical device tax. A good number of Democratic Senators have joined us in the past to get rid of this job killer, and they deserve the opportunity to help us eliminate it once and for all.

The senior Senator from North Dakota has an amendment that would speed approval of the Keystone Pipeline. This is a project that would create thousands of jobs right away, and it is just a no-brainer. Senate Democrats need to join Democrats across the country who have already endorsed this commonsense initiative and help us pass it.

I personally plan to file an amendment that would give Congress the ability to stop EPA's back-door national energy tax and would also keep unelected bureaucrats from blocking desperately needed jobs in Kentucky by sitting on surface mining permitting. Remember, this administration's anti-Kentucky policies have helped bring about a depression—that is a depression with a capital D—in many Kentucky coal counties. It is about time they started having a little compassion for the coal families who just want to put food on the table, and that is exactly what my amendment aims to do.

So these are just a few of the many proposals Republican Senators will be putting forward this week. They represent the kind of solutions our country needs right now to finally emerge from this awful economy—real solutions that focus on creating well-paying jobs, increasing take-home pay, training a world-class workforce, and breaking a seemingly endless cycle of chronic high unemployment.

As I have indicated, we have tried the Washington Democratic approach for years now. We know that it just hasn't worked. We know their new agenda isn't serious, that it is nothing more than an ObamaCare distraction strategy. We know this because Democrats actually told us it was created by their campaign committee, that it was designed to appeal to their base.

So if the Democratic majority is finally ready to get down to business and create jobs, this is a moment to prove it. This is the moment to drop the endless campaigning. This is the moment to work with us to actually create jobs and help the middle class, and this is the moment for legislation that would do just that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be a period of morning business for one hour. Senators are permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and the majority controlling the first half of the time.

The Senator from Illinois.

FILING DEADLINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the filing deadline for first degree amendments to H.R. 3979, which is the legislative vehicle for the unemployment insurance extension, be at 2:30 p.m. today, April 1.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. DURBIN. I listened carefully to the statement just made by the Republican leader, Senator McCONNELL of Kentucky, in which he promised concrete ideas, real hope, change, job-related approaches, free enterprise—giving free enterprise a chance, trying to deal with putting America back to work. Then he gave us three examples.

I might say to the Senator that I am familiar with all three because none of these are new. We have heard them over and over from the Republican side of the aisle. I will not go through each one of them. A couple of them relate to the Affordable Care Act. It is interesting to me that the House of Representatives has voted—I believe 45 times—to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The Senator from Kentucky said we have to get back to free enterprise ideas.

Let me tell you about the free enterprise idea when it came to health care. Before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the free enterprise idea was this: If you and your family were unfortunate enough to have a sick baby, if your wife was a cancer survivor, if your child had diabetes, the free enterprise answer was: We will raise the cost of health insurance to the point that you cannot afford it or we won't even offer it. That was the free enterprise idea on health insurance for millions of American families.

There was another free enterprise idea out there in health care as well. It said: We are going to sell you health insurance policies that just protect you up to a certain amount of money. If tomorrow you are in a terrible auto accident, if the day after tomorrow you are diagnosed with cancer and face millions of dollars of radiation, surgery, and care before you can get your life back together again, be my guest to pay for it yourselves. That is why medical bills are the number one driver of bankruptcy in America today. That is free enterprise at work. But we said, let's put some sensible rules for the

road in here, so that families who buy health insurance have the promise that they will have peace of mind when they face these life threatening struggles which families face every day.

So we passed the Affordable Care Act and not a single Republican—not one—not a single Republican would join us in that effort. We rejected the free enterprise approach to health care and said let's have something that basically respects families, basically respects the needs we all have to have protection when somebody in the house is sick. Not a single Republican would support us, and they never have since.

The bill we passed isn't perfect. Changes will have to be made. I have said that from the start, although I supported it. But not a single Republican has been willing to sit down and work on bipartisan compromises and changes—not one. It is take it or leave it, and they want to walk away from it.

We are not going back to those old days. I can guarantee them that the American people will never return to their idea of health insurance because it was fundamentally unfair, it was too expensive, and a lot of Americans didn't have a fighting chance to ever have health insurance once in their lives. Things have changed. The reports are in, and the reports are telling us that dramatic things are occurring. As the Affordable Care Act's initial enrollment period closes, at least 9.5 million previously uninsured people have gained coverage. Some have done so through the marketplaces created by law, some through private insurance, others through an expanded Medicaid. Incidentally, Medicaid has been expanded in about half of the States.

Listen to this: The increased coverage from the Affordable Care Act so far amounts to substantial progress toward one of the law's principal goals. It is the most significant expansion of health care coverage since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid 49 years ago.

The Republicans want to return to the "good old days," and they want to tell these people being uninsured is really better for you. It is the free enterprise system.

That is not good enough, I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle. What we have here is an opportunity for families for the first time in their lives to have health insurance coverage.

Has there ever been a moment in your life where you had a sick baby and you were in the hospital waiting room and you had no health insurance? I have. It happened when I was in law school. I remember it to this day, sitting there with my wife and baby with a number in my hand waiting to see who would walk through that door and be the doctor for my baby. You will never forget that as long as you live. That shouldn't happen to anybody. Everyone should have the peace of mind of health insurance coverage, and that is what this bill does. If the Senators on the other side want to return to the