

## MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business until 3:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER and Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3766 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

## REPUBLICAN GOALS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened carefully when the Republican leader from Kentucky, Senator MCCONNELL, came to the floor. This is the key time, before an election campaign, when parties announce their goals, their strategy, their message to the voters.

So I listened carefully as the Republican Senate leader came to the floor for the first time in this 3-week period, to spell out what his goals would be in terms of where the country has been coming from and where it will go. It struck me as strange. Because, at this time of year, we are used to new shows coming on television, new seasons beginning, being introduced to new plot lines and new stars and new ideas and broadcasts, but we do not expect reruns. To get reruns being announced on television at this time of year would be defeating the purpose of attracting an audience interested in what is new.

I listened to Senator MCCONNELL's speech, and it was a Republican rerun, things they have been saying for the last year and a half, in fact for many years, still the message of the Republican Party. What they say and what Senator MCCONNELL said today is: Elect us to lead the Senate and we will give you more of the same. We will return you to the Bush economic policies.

I listened carefully as he criticized President Obama. I have heard him before. Senator MCCONNELL has come to the floor and criticized President Obama for intervening to try to save the automobile companies across the United States. Many of us supported the President. I think the President was right. He did not run for office to become a major leader in saving American automobile companies.

This was a challenge thrust on him. Yet he accepted it and realized if we started closing down automobile plants across Illinois and across America, thousands of people would be out of work. He did not want to see that happen. So the government did intervene.

I have heard the Senator from Kentucky come to the floor before, as he did this afternoon, and criticize the President for his intervention in the automobile companies. Well, during

the course of our August break, many of us were busy doing a lot of things. It is possible that Senator MCCONNELL missed the good news, the good news in the New York Times on Friday August 13 and Saturday August 14.

On Friday, August 13, headline: "Profit Strong, G.M. Names a New Chief." Then, on August 14: "Detroit Goes From Gloom to Economic Bright Spot. Optimism is Rising With Sales, Profits and Hiring—Economy Still a Threat."

Here is what the article said:

After a dismal period of huge losses and deep cuts that culminated in the Obama administration's bailout of General Motors and Chrysler, the gloom over the American auto industry is starting to lift. Jobs are growing. Factory workers are anticipating their first healthy profit-sharing check in years. Sales are rebounding, with the Commerce Department reporting Friday that automobiles were a bright spot in July's mostly disappointing retail sales.

The Senator from Kentucky must have missed it. The very action he criticized, of the Obama administration intervening with the automobile companies, has been a success. Mr. Whitacre is stepping aside. GM is picking its own chief. They are off on their own now, in a profitable way, to keep jobs in the United States and not ship them overseas. All the criticism of what President Obama did notwithstanding, this worked. This was a success. This saved jobs.

But, again, the litany of grievances from the Republican side included that the President did something to help GM and Chrysler. Thank goodness he did for the thousands of workers in my home State of Illinois and across the United States of America.

I heard the Senator from Kentucky criticize the President's attempt to reduce the cost of health insurance for Americans; the President's attempt to give senior citizens on Medicare a helping hand to pay for their prescription drugs. I wish the Senator from Kentucky could have been with me in Champaign, IL, when I met with a group of senior citizens who thanked us for the \$250 of relief this year, which will grow every year, until we fill the doughnut hole in prescription Part D.

I wish the Senator from Kentucky could have been with me as I traveled around Illinois and had mothers come up to me and talk about 22-year-old sons with preexisting conditions who did not qualify for health insurance and thank me because the health care reform bill now says that son or daughter can stay under the family health insurance plan until they reach the age of 26.

If Senator MCCONNELL and others believe we should repeal this, that we should take away this protection for families on health insurance—\$250 to help those under Medicare prescription Part D—or the strength that people will now have to fight off insurance

companies that deny them coverage when they need it the most, if that is his position, so be it.

But it is not a new idea. It is a speech he has delivered on the floor over and over and over. So the Republican message for November is: Go back to the old days when you did not have a fighting chance against health insurance companies, when nobody would stand up to them. Go back to the old days when we would not put any money into the recession that is threatening our country.

The President did with the stimulus package, which is being ridiculed with some dance lessons or whatever he said. I wish Senator MCCONNELL would have come to see this President's stimulus package at work in Illinois. It takes a lot longer to drive because we are building highways right and left and airports.

Downtown Normal, IL, has an intermodal center that is the centerpiece of revitalizing downtown; major contribution from the President's stimulus package, putting hundreds of people to work smack-dab in central Illinois, where those jobs count.

I heard the minority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, criticize the Wall Street reform bill. He criticized the Wall Street reform bill, after Bernie Madoff and the bailouts of the Bush Administration, after billions of dollars sent to Wall Street because of their failures, and they thanked us, sent us a little thank-you card and said: Oh, incidentally, we are giving one another bonuses with your bailout money.

Well, for some that was fine but not for President Obama, not for this Congress. We have real Wall Street reform, which will guarantee no more bailouts. That was Senator BOXER's amendment. No. 2, make certain Wall Street is regulated so it does not sink us in another recession, the way we are languishing now in one that is going to take a long time from which to recover.

The Senator from Kentucky believes that was a bad idea. He voted against it. I think it was a good idea to pass Wall Street reform. The final centerpiece of the Republican message for November is to return to the Bush tax cuts. President Obama has said, we should extend the tax cuts for married couples making under \$250,000 and for individuals making under \$200,000 but, he said: Let's not give them to the wealthiest Americans, the top 2 percent.

So if you happen to be among the fortunate few in America who make \$1 million a year, what is the difference? Well, the difference is this: Under our plan of capping this tax cut at \$250,000, the millionaire is only going to get \$6,300 in a tax cut. I do not know if they will even notice it, \$6,300.

But under Senator MCCONNELL's plan, the centerpiece of the Republican