

NOT VOTING—10

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Bunning | Gregg | Sessions |
| Burr | Hutchison | Vitter |
| Chambliss | Inhofe | |
| Cornyn | Isakson | |

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 37. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, according to the strange logic of Democratic leaders in Congress, the best way to show middle-class Americans that they care about creating jobs is to slam some of America's top job creators with a massive tax increase. Today's votes were an affront to the millions of Americans who are struggling to find work and a clear signal that Democrats in Congress still have not gotten the message of the November elections.

With unemployment over 9 percent for more consecutive months than at any time since World War II, the voters are looking for a different approach here in Washington. Two years of out-of-control spending and big government policies have led to record deficits and debts, chronic unemployment, and deep uncertainty about our Nation's fiscal future. Meaningless show-votes and antibusiness rhetoric won't do anything to make the situation better.

This Saturday's session is a total waste of the American people's time. One of the votes we held today was opposed by every single Republican and many Democrats. The other vote we held was a poll-tested plan opposed by every single Republican and the President of the United States. As you can see, nothing we did today stopped the tax hikes that are now less than a month away. As the majority leader said this morning, these theatrics need to end.

There is strong bipartisan opposition to these attempts to raise taxes on small businesses across the country. Americans do not want political posturing; they want jobs. Today's votes are the clearest signal yet that Democrats in Congress do not take our Nation's job crisis seriously.

I yield the floor.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Will the majority leader yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the majority leader yield?

Mr. BAUCUS. He is not the majority leader, I might add.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I am sorry. Will the minority leader yield for a question?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader?

Ms. LANDRIEU. I guess that is a no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate

proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, there are several Senators who are prepared to speak this morning but would be unable to because of limited time. In order to accommodate them, I ask unanimous consent that the order of speakers on the Democratic side by the following: Senator DORGAN, 20 minutes; Senator BOXER, 10 minutes; Senator MCCASKILL, 10 minutes; and Senator CASEY, 10 minutes. Further, if there is a Republican seeking recognition on the floor, that we alternate back and forth between the two sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, may I ask consent of the first Member on that list to speak for 30 seconds? Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEGOTIATING WITH THE
PRESIDENT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I was going to ask the minority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, who just insulted many of us by saying we don't care about small business or the economy, and as the chair of the Small Business Committee, I was going to ask him this: Since President Obama has been in such good faith in the last couple of days negotiating this package with him, my question was, does he regret saying on national television that his No. 1, primary goal is to unseat the President? I was going to ask him how he felt about that. That is a tough place to start a negotiation, which is why some of us are interested in how these negotiations might be going with that as a starting point. But he ran off the floor and did not answer that question. I am going to continue to ask it. Thank you.

Let me just add that I do not agree with every policy of the President. Obviously, I am in a major fight over offshore oil and gas. But it is very interesting to us who have been in negotiations for quite some time on many important issues, how you start with saying: My goal is to defeat you, but here is the package we want you to accept. Some of us are having a hard time with that kind of negotiation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, what is the order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized to speak for 10 minutes.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I think I had requested 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is 20 minutes. The Chair is sorry.

TAX POLICY

Mr. DORGAN. I thank the Chair.

I was surprised to hear the minority leader suggest that today's session of the Senate—a Saturday session, which I suppose is inconvenient but nonetheless something we ought to do to work on things that are important for the American people—I was surprised to hear him say it was a waste of the taxpayers' money. I will talk a little bit about what I think is a waste of the taxpayers' money, but coming here, doing the business, trying to reduce the Federal deficit, trying to make important decisions about tax issues, is not a waste of time or money, in my judgment.

One of the things I find disheartening these days in the political debate about these issues is the increasing tendency for one side of a political debate to create their new set of realities. They just invent a new set of realities. Then, from that invention, they go ahead and make their arguments.

By the way, most of the reporting then is off of that invention. It would be nice if the reporting would say that is not a reality, that is an invention. If, for example, we said the Earth is round and there is substantial scientific evidence that the Earth is round, and the other side said, no, the Earth is flat, tomorrow there would be a story that said opinions differ on the shape of Earth. Of course, the facts do not differ, but that is the way these things exist these days—the creation of their own new reality.

Let me talk about what has happened with respect to the tax cuts, and let me give just a bit of history because I think it is important.

In 2001, taxes were cut. I did not vote for it. I voted against it. Let me tell you why. I don't want to revisit that at great length, but the proposal to cut taxes in 2001 came on the heels of the year 2000 when, for the first time in 30 years, this country had a budget surplus—a budget surplus, mind you. The economists and others expected and projected that the surpluses would exist way into the future. For the next 10 years, we would have budget surpluses, they predicted.

I did not believe that, but nonetheless President George W. Bush, new to the office, said: Well, if we are going to have budget surpluses going forward, let's make sure we give them back to the American people in the form of tax cuts.

I said: Why don't we be a bit conservative? What if we don't have these surpluses? They are only projections, after all. We don't have them; they are just projections by economists who, in many cases, can't remember their home phone number for 2 days but give us projections for 5 and 10 years. Let's be a little conservative.

No, they said, we don't want to be conservative. Let's do these tax cuts, the bulk of which go to the wealthiest because those who construct these tax cuts always believe there is a trickle-