

Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 267 Leg.]

YEAS—53

Akaka	Franken	Murray
Baucus	Gillibrand	Nelson (NE)
Bayh	Harkin	Nelson (FL)
Begich	Inouye	Pryor
Bennet	Johnson	Reed
Bingaman	Kerry	Reid
Boxer	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Brown (OH)	Kohl	Sanders
Cantwell	Landrieu	Schumer
Cardin	Lautenberg	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Specter
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Conrad	Lincoln	Tester
Coons	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Dodd	McCaskill	Webb
Dorgan	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Mikulski	

NAYS—45

Alexander	Ensign	Lugar
Barrasso	Enzi	McCain
Bennett	Feingold	McConnell
Bond	Graham	Murkowski
Brown (MA)	Grassley	Risch
Bunning	Hagan	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Sessions
Chambliss	Hutchison	Shelby
Coburn	Inhofe	Snowe
Cochran	Isakson	Thune
Collins	Johanns	Udall (CO)
Corker	Kirk	Vitter
Cornyn	Kyl	Voivovich
Crapo	LeMieux	Warner
DeMint	Lieberman	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Brownback Gregg

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 45. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we go into a period of morning business until 6:30 tonight, and that Senators be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REJECTION OF COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I stand here simply amazed at what happened in the Senate, although I probably shouldn't be. I stand here amazed because in these economic times, senior citizens from Gallipolis to Ash-

tabula, to Middletown, to Toledo, in my State, and from the Iron Range to Rochester, MN, the State of the Presiding Officer, and all across this country, who didn't get a cost-of-living adjustment this year; who are victims of inflation—medical inflation especially—and the inflation rate is not very high in our society, so they didn't get a cost-of-living adjustment, even though their cost of living has gone up—every single Republican in this institution—every single Republican—voted no on a \$250 one-time check to go to senior citizens. It would have meant the equivalent of about 1½ percent or less than that cost-of-living adjustment.

If they are so interested in balancing the budget that they do not want to do that, maybe that is one argument—although not a very good one in these economic times—but when, in the same week, they sign a letter saying we are not going to do anything—every single Republican signed a letter saying we are not going to do anything in the Senate—we are not voting yes on anything until we get the tax cut for millionaires and billionaires, that is pretty outrageous.

In the tax cut they are asking for, someone who makes \$10 million a year gets a \$40,000 tax cut—I am sorry, somebody making \$10 million a year gets a \$100,000 tax cut, I believe; somebody making \$1 million gets a \$40,000 tax cut. And they are saying they are willing to vote for that, but they are not willing to vote for \$250 for every senior citizen in this country.

The cost of that, if you want to get in the weeds and talk about budget issues, the cost of that \$250 that Senator SANDERS sponsored would be about \$13 billion. The cost of these tax cuts for the wealthy is about \$700 billion over the next 10 years.

Basically, what they are doing, what we are doing for their tax cuts for the wealthy is in essence borrowing \$700 billion from China and putting it on our children's and grandchildren's credit card to pay off later—let them worry about it—and giving that money to millionaires and billionaires. They are willing to do that, but they will not vote \$250, a total of \$13 billion one time. They are not willing, for this year, to help those seniors in Youngstown and Lima and Zanesville and Chillicothe and Tipp City, OH. I just don't get it.

I know it is the Christmas season. That is not a reason to do it, but you would think there would be a little more generosity in their hearts during this most difficult time for seniors who are barely making it. The average senior citizen in this country gets about \$14,000 Social Security a year. Many seniors in my State, in places such as Columbus and Dayton and Portsmouth, live on not much more than their Social Security check, and a \$250 payment would have made a difference—maybe not having to split their medicine in two and taking half a dosage

each time or maybe actually being able to heat their homes as it gets colder and colder as the winter comes upon us, that they would have a little opportunity to at least do that and live a little more comfortably.

Instead this place again said yes to tax cuts for the rich, no to the senior citizens. A majority of Senators voted for this, but every single Republican voted against it. I don't get it. I don't mean to sound partisan, but when it is like that it is unbelievable. When Senators—most of us are going to go home and enjoy our holidays—that we would put our Nation's seniors through something like that.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COBURN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for the time I may consume, probably not longer than 20 or 25 minutes.

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

THE BUDGET

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I hope the American people are watching Washington right now. We are at a defining moment in our country. There is not anybody in this body who does not recognize that our country is on an unsustainable course. They know it. It is well known. The world knows it. We can argue about how close we are to the debt crisis and the liquidity crisis, but no one disputes that one is coming. We just don't know when. Yet in the next 2 weeks Congress is going to make that problem \$1 trillion worse.

We can say that a lot of what we are doing is the right thing to do, but what we are not doing is addressing the real issues that need to be accompanied by grownups as we look at this. What should the American people make of this? It is kind of like we are on the Titanic here in America and everybody is saying: The bar is open, we will just have a party the next 2 weeks. We are going to spend another \$900 billion or we are going to set it up so that it can be spent.

I do not often agree with a columnist by the name of Thomas Friedman, but he has a column today that I think everyone in our collective body should read. It is aptly titled "Still Digging." Here, he writes: Given where we need to go, this tax deal—this tax deal, opportunity scholarship deal, unemployment deal, tax holiday deal—is just another shot of morphine to a country that needs to do things that are big and hard and still only wants to do things that are easy and small. He concludes: Economics is not war. It can be win-