staff needlessly or endlessly while the company got weak. We cannot do it in this country of ours. 

So we face a very difficult task because people are feeling the squeeze on their incomes, concerned about job protection, concerned about being able to stay in their houses. We still face a lot of foreclosure possibilities for homeowners. They cannot educate their children, cannot take care of their health. We cannot say to them, as we used to say, that we know our children will do better in the future in their lives than we did in ours. We cannot say it and be honest about it. We do not know that is true. If we continue along the path we are on, we are going to be looking at fairly bleak things to tell our children about as they grow, if we do not work harder to balance the budget, educate our kids, make sure their health is good, with America being what it is always thought to be a good country to bring your families up and make sure life is acceptable or better than they otherwise might have had.

Madam President, how is the time here?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). The Senator used 9 1⁄2 minutes.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I will take that half minute, and I ask unanimous consent that if I go over the half minute that I get 2 more minutes.

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

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I served in World War II a long time ago, but I have been around a long time. When I went into the Army—I enlisted when I was 18—my father was deathly ill with cancer. My mother was 37 years old. The prospects for life for our family was very grim. I went to the Army. My father, with a condition, arranged with the recruiters that I would be allowed to stay home till my father passed away. He was 43 years old. My mother became a 37-year-old widow, and things were tough. Money was owed to doctors and pharmacists and hospitals.

Why do I talk about this now? It is because I was given the benefit, as were 8 million others who were in uniform, to get my college education. I went to Columbia University. It was so far distant from my vision when I graduated from high school and enlisted in the Army. It turned out to be the greatest generation America has ever seen. It was because the government intervened at the right time and made sure that education was abundantly available for those who could learn. That is what we ought to recall about America, and not this kind of a gloomy picture that says, OK, we are growing, but so are the threats to health and well-being.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to extend morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

AMERICA INVENTS ACT

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, before the Senate consideration of the America Invents Act of 2011, I wish to express my unequivocal support for this bill. This is not a perfect bill, but the fact is it is going to be a very important occasion to pass this because we have not passed a major piece of legislation over 60 years or around that length of time. It has been a long time in the making, but it is well worth the effort to modernize our patent system. Despite modifications along the way, the bill retains its strength and ability to bring about true reform.

In considering our country’s economic condition, the bill’s passage could not come at a more opportune time. The America Invents Act is integral to creating jobs and spurring growth across all sectors of our country. After all, jobs and economic growth are crucial to maintaining our Nation’s dominance in innovation and entrepreneurship.

I would like to briefly mention a few key provisions of the act that improve our outdated patent system. These include transitioning to a first-inventor-to-file system, which all the rest of the world has; allowing third parties to submit relevant prior art during patent prosecution; creating a patent quality-enhancing supplemental examination process; and instituting a post-grant review and an inter partes reexamination expansion. All of that is extremely important.

The bill provides fee-setting authority and addresses a long-felt need by the patent community and now by the majority of this body to end the practice—the obnoxious practice—of diverting fees from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. No wonder we have such a rough time getting things to work.

Finally, the legislation makes important clarifications to tax strategy patents and creates a pilot program to review already-issued business method patents.

This enumeration underscores a holistic approach that strikes the right balance. I hope everyone in this Chamber recognizes what we are accomplishing. We have come together in a bipartisan fashion to invigorate some of our country’s greatest strengths—our ideas and our inventive spirit. I conclude not only recommending Senate Judiciary Committee chairman PAT LEAHY for his leadership and tenacity in moving this bill through the Senate. He deserves a lot of credit. His vision and tireless efforts have made today’s vote a reality. Today, we have turned in patent reform legislation since 2006—and in reality, even earlier than that—passing the torch of leadership along the way. One time, I was chairman; he has been chairman. It is satisfying to see the time has finally come to pass this bill.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of our distinguished ranking member, CHUCK GRASSLEY. His unwavering support and commonsense approach have been invaluable in this process.

I wish to acknowledge the various staff members of Senator LEAHY, my staff, and Senator GRASSLEY’s staff for the work they have done on this bill—very important. Likewise, contributors to the House Judiciary Committee and other Members of this body have enriched our debate.

Finally, as I have said, I wish to thank our bill managers’ staff for their sustained efforts throughout the process. Aaron Cooper, Bruce Cohen, Rita Lari Jochum, and Kolan Davis have been instrumental in getting us to this point. I also thank my own counsel, Matt Sandgren, who has done a terrific job on this bill for all these years we have been working on it, and Remy Yucel, my USPTO detaillee, for her and Matt’s commitment and perseverance over these many years. They have been a formidable team.

I also acknowledge the important work of Joe Matal, Sarah Beth Groshart, Tim Molino, and Curtis LeGeyt.

Madam President, passing the America Invents Act is the right thing to do, and I urge my colleagues to join in this monumental undertaking. It is the right thing to do, it will help our country, it is going to reestablish our patent laws in ways they should be, and it will stop the fee diversion that has been going on, assuming we can get help from the House as well, and I believe we will. It will be a bill that I think we will have to go to conference on and hopefully be able to perfect it even more. I am grateful for all who have been involved, and I hope and pray we can get this through both Houses of Congress and establish this monumental bill at a monumental time. It is very important in all our lives.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.