

amendment; that the Toomey amendment be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold; and upon disposition of the Toomey amendment, the substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on S. 815, as amended; that if cloture is invoked, the time until 1:45 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that at 1:45 p.m., all postcloture time be yielded back, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended; finally, if cloture is not invoked, I be recognized.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate everyone's cooperation. This is how we should do legislation, work together. This is something we have done together and I appreciate everyone's work. It has not been easy for everyone. Not everybody is satisfied, but a lot of people are satisfied.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent we proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, until 7 p.m.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THANKING SENATOR MERKLEY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the Senator from Oregon leaves the floor, I wish to thank him for his leadership on this bill. He picked up the mantle from our dear late colleague Senator Ted Kennedy. Senator MERKLEY had worked on this issue in his home State before coming to the Senate, and we have worked very closely together as this bill has been on the floor. He has been very fair and open-minded. Although we were not able to work out agreements on everything, as I would have hoped, I do believe there was a good-faith effort which was evident in the passage of Senator PORTMAN's amendment.

I am very excited that tomorrow we will be reaching final passage, and Senator MERKLEY deserves an enormous amount of credit for his leadership. I wanted to thank him while he was still present on the floor and also tell him how much I appreciated his kind words earlier today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THANKING STAFF

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, tomorrow we will take a vote on Senator TOOMEY's amendment and on cloture and final passage. There may not be time, as we are wrapping up the work on this bill, for me to pay tribute to some very valuable individuals who worked very hard on this bill; that is, the members of the staff on both sides.

I wish to particularly commend three members of my staff—John Kane, Katie Brown, and Betsy McDonnell—who have literally worked night and day to try work out amendments and procedure with a wide variety of staff on both sides of the aisle.

Our staffs are often the unsung heroes of this institution, and in this case I was receiving emails from my staff—for instance last night at 1:46 a.m.—giving me the latest updates. I just wish to publicly thank them, the floor staff on both sides, the HELP Committee staff, and everyone who was involved but particularly the three members of my staff, John, Katie, and Betsy, who have literally devoted countless hours to this bill. I know they will be very happy when we reach final passage tomorrow.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 2013

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, this past Monday I visited a senior center in Youngstown, OH, and met with seniors and others, talking about what they hear as threats to Social Security. They hear some of the wise people in this town, if you will—some of the people on television and the political pundits and the economists and the newspaper editorial boards—saying that we need to restructure entitlements or reform entitlements, and that scares them because they don't get very specific. They often, in those statements about reforming entitlements, don't—the people saying it and the reporters asking the questions don't really scratch underneath the surface and say: What does that really mean? It usually means cutting Social Security benefits, but more on that in a second.

I spoke with a woman named Gloria, a 70-year-old widow, currently living in

subsidized housing. She has lived on Social Security since her husband's death. Her benefits barely cover the costs of housing and groceries, not to mention health care. She told me that without Social Security, she would not know what to do to be able to get along in her life.

We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to deal with this Nation's deficit. That means everything from eliminating farm subsidies—the directed payments we are doing in the farm bill, and Senator THUNE and I wrote the language to do that. It means closing the carried interest loophole for Wall Street hedge fund managers. It means eliminating tax breaks for oil companies and stopping the idiotic—for want of a better term—practice of encouraging and enticing, through the Tax Code, companies to actually invest overseas, so that if you shut down a plant in Steubenville or Toledo and move it to Wuhan or Xi'an, China, you actually can get tax breaks to do that.

I am a grandfather a couple of times and about to be a third time. I guess as we get older, we look at the world, not surprisingly, from a different perspective. I see, because of Social Security and Medicare, that hundreds of thousands, millions of Americans get to spend more time with their children and grandchildren. That is because of Social Security and Medicare. Forty-five years ago, before Medicare, 48 years ago, half of America's seniors did not have health insurance. Today, 99 percent have it. We know that means people live longer, healthier lives. It means not just that they get to see their grandchildren, which is the pleasure and the delight of almost all grandparents, it also means they get to impart their wisdom and knowledge and values to their grandchildren.

Margaret Mead once said wisdom and knowledge are passed from grandparent to grandchild, because there is this sort of natural tension—or there might be—between children and parents, but between grandchildren and grandparents it makes for a richer society. Because of these two Social Security programs, Medicare and Social Security, we are a richer, better country.

Today, 63 million Americans receive Social Security benefits. In my State it is 2 million. Let me give a couple of statistics, because this is really a moral question of what we do with our retirement system. For two-thirds of seniors, Social Security is more than half of their income in my State and in the State of the Senator from New Hampshire, who is sitting here. In the State of the Senator from Connecticut it is not much different. No State is much different from this. Social Security provides more than half of the income for about two-thirds of seniors. For more than one-third of seniors, Social Security provides essentially 90 percent, or all, of their income. For one-third of seniors, without Social Security, they would have zero or close to zero income.