

over 1.9 million miles or, if you were to put it relative to the Moon, there would be eight stacks—seven stacks that go directly to the Moon and one further stack that would be 95 percent of the way there.

These are astonishing sums that we are talking about, and the majority party here wants to jam this through using the reconciliation process—no consultation with our side. They want to just blow it through here with 20 hours of debate, a vote-arama, pass \$1.9 trillion in spending, and go home, having no consideration whatsoever about the fact that we are mortgaging our children's futures. At some point in time, there will be a day of reckoning—a debt crisis—and it won't be pretty.

My suggestion, at least as we consider this, is to actually have a debate. Let's have a discussion. Let's consider the amendments. Let's not do this in 20, 24, 30 hours. Let's take the time to seriously consider what we are doing to our children in contemplating spending a stack of dollar bills over 135 miles high, extending more than halfway to the Moon.

I yield the floor.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Ohio.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION SYSTEM

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Madam President. This week, we have an opportunity to finally deliver for millions of retirees and workers and small businesses by saving America's pensions. The multiemployer pension system is on the verge of collapse, threatening the livelihoods of more than a million Americans and thousands of small businesses from New Hampshire to Ohio, across the country. This affects more than 100,000 workers and retirees in my State alone and millions more around the country. These pension plans were in danger before. Now the economic emergency we are in has accelerated the crisis even further.

Multiemployer pension plans receive contributions based on the hours worked. As workers have been laid off during the pandemic, their employers no longer contribute to the pension plans, while current retirees continue receiving their earned benefits, making the plan even more likely to fail. And if that happens, it won't just be retirees feeling the pain.

Current workers will be stuck paying into pension funds for benefits they will never receive. Small businesses will be left drowning in pension liability they can't afford to pay. Small businesses that have been in the family for generations could face bankruptcy, and workers will lose jobs in businesses which have been forced to close up shop. The effect will ripple across the

entire economy at a time when we can least afford it.

The Chamber of Commerce has said:

The multiemployer pension system is an integral part of [our] economy.

It is not only union businesses that participate in these plans that will close their doors. This will devastate small communities across the industrial heartland. Small businesses in these communities are already hurting because of the virus. That is why we have to get this done.

After a lifetime of hard work and service to our country, these workers and retirees have already waited far too long for Congress to do the job we should have done. We have been trying to solve this for years. Unions, the Chamber of Commerce, small businesses pretty much agree we need to get this done.

The House has done its part. They have passed a solution multiple times. Every time it stopped because of MITCH MCCONNELL and the U.S. Senate. He has deliberately blocked it. We have continued to try. The House does it year after year. People like the Presiding Officer and others have fought for this in the Finance Committee, have fought for this on the Senate floor, and we simply haven't been able to move it.

Now that Senator MCCONNELL is out of the way, we can finally keep the promise to these workers and their families. They spent years working on assembly lines, bagging groceries, driving trucks, working to keep our economy going, and money came out of every single one of their paychecks to earn these pensions.

People in this town don't always understand the collective bargaining process. People give up dollars at the bargaining table today for the promise of a secure retirement with healthcare and a pension. That is what collective bargaining is. Union workers sit down with each other and their employer, talk about giving up wages. They are willing to give up wages today to have a more secure future. What is more American than that?

For years now, they have lived in fear of drastic cuts. One retiree from Michigan told us he would lose two-thirds of his income and that "at 71 years old, there's no jobs out there that we could get to recover what we'd lose."

He said:

Pass the Butch Lewis Act so . . . we can take this weight off of us, and retire with the dignity that we earned for 30, 40, 50 years of hard working labor.

It is always the same story. When Wall Street is in trouble, there is a bailout. When corporations need something, the stock market is in trouble, the Washington elite drop everything to help. But these workers, they are not asking for a bailout; they are not asking for a handout; they are just asking for what they earned.

These workers have been in the fight for years. Their activism has gotten us

this far. They have traveled all day and all night on buses. They have rallied outside in the bitter cold, in the hot DC summer, all trying to get people in this town to listen.

Let's finally deliver for them. Let's give them peace of mind. Let's keep this promise. It comes back to the dignity of work. When work has dignity, we honor the retirement security people earned. When work has dignity, we honor their retirement security that they gave up at the bargaining table in collective bargaining.

I urge my Republican colleagues in this body—colleagues with healthcare and retirement plans paid for by taxpayers, including these taxpayers that have been paying into their own pension funds for years. I urge my Republican colleagues to think about these retired workers and think about the small business owners. Companies like Smucker's—there is a baker in Navarre, OH. Think of the candy company, Spangler, in Bryan, OH—companies like that. Think about these retired workers. Think about these small business owners and think about the stress they are facing.

I have listened to my colleagues' speeches for years, extolling the values of hard work and the virtue of small businesses. This is your chance to live up to your own words, to show Americans if you work hard all your life, your government will, in fact, be there for you.

Join us, and let's pass a solution that really indeed does honor the dignity of work.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO DR. ELLEN HODGES AND ELIZABETH BATES

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, it is that time of the week that our pages—when we had them—used to always look forward to. It is the time of the week that I come down on the floor and talk about someone in Alaska who is making a huge impact on my State, a lot of times for the country. These two Alaskans I am going to talk about actually have gotten national news for the great work they are doing, somebody we call our Alaskan of the Week. It is usually about a group of individuals, one, two, maybe a group of people who are helping make Alaska what, in my view, is the greatest State in the country—resilient, tough, generous, kind, unique.

Like so many States, this pandemic has really hit Alaska hard—tourism for sure. The oil and gas sector last year was really hit hard with low prices. Unfortunately, this year, with the Biden