

I take this opportunity to ask my colleagues if there is a way that we could get this nomination cleared. I know there are a number of difficult and nettlesome issues in front of the Senate, and sometimes things are associated one with the other. But if possible, if we could free this nomination to move it forward so the United States would have an ambassador to the Philippines to negotiate and to see to the safe release of these two hostages, it would be important to America, important to the Philippines, and to the overall world effort.

The United States is involved in some delicate issues with the Philippines at the present time. I will not speak about that. The current issue I am concerned about is not only the work the United States is doing with the Philippines—the Philippine military has taken on this exercise to free the Burnhams; they have been aggressively pursuing the terrorist group for some period of time—but we need a leader from the United States. We need our ambassador to the Philippines in this delicate situation.

If the Presiding Officer or other Members of the Senate could have seen "48 Hours," they would have seen Gracia Burnham pleading: Will somebody please show us mercy. Will somebody please notice that we are here and help us out. She said that morning she awakened with chest pains. They are living in the jungle, being moved daily and on the run. It is a difficult, horrible situation. They need our key representative in that country.

I ask other Members of the Senate to please consider and see fit to moving forward on this nomination that has cleared unanimously the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—a professional, highly qualified for this position, which would mean so much for our efforts in the Philippines to date. If my colleagues could see to that, this would be an important addition to the international portfolio of ambassadors.

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.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from New York.

NEW YORK'S GROUND ZERO CLEANUP: AHEAD OF SCHEDULE AND UNDER BUDGET

Mrs. CLINTON. Madam President, along with my colleague Senator SCHUMER, and Congressman NADLER in the House, I reaffirm the commitment of this Congress and this Nation to the rebuilding of New York.

One hundred thirty-five days after the worst attacks in history on U.S.

soil, I ask my colleagues to join me in a pledge to fulfill our promise to all Americans to make New York—our financial, our cultural, and media heart—whole again.

The World Trade Center attacks claimed the lives of close to 3,000 of our fellow citizens, as well as those who had come from other countries to America seeking a better life. The emotional toll has been staggering. I have met with countless family members who lost mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives, daughters and sons. While there is nothing we can say or do that will bring these loved ones back to their families, the outpouring of compassion and kindness from all over the Nation has brought comfort to many.

Along with this heartfelt sympathy, I believe we have an obligation to help not only those who lost their loved ones but also help those who lost their livelihoods rebuild their lives and reclaim their futures.

New Yorkers were comforted when the President and leaders from the House and the Senate came to ground zero and stood in the House and Senate promising to make New York whole again. Their determination in the face of what seemed at the time great odds reinforced the workers who labored day after day, night after night, at ground zero. Despite the many obstacles, the recovery effort has moved forward faster than anyone could have predicted.

Some months ago, I told my colleagues our best estimate was that with 24-hour-day shifts, we would perhaps have to take an entire year to clear the site to be ready to rebuild. I am very proud of the construction workers who have been working day in and day out, often at great personal sacrifice and risk, as well as the contractors who have worked with the city, to the end that we now believe this cleanup effort will be completed 4 months ahead of schedule and billions of dollars under budget.

That does not in any way take away from the fact that the financial toll has been enormous. In fact, the terrorist attacks are estimated to cost New York City and its businesses over \$100 billion in financial losses over the next 2 years. Lower Manhattan's business district has been decimated. Nearly 25 million square feet of office space, 20 percent of all of downtown New York's office space, was damaged or destroyed by the attacks, leaving 850 businesses and over 125,000 workers physically displaced.

The effects of these attacks have also been staggering on New York's workforce. New York City's unemployment rate spiked to 7.4 percent in December, nearly a 3-year high, from 6.9 percent in November. The September 11 attacks ruined our small businesses, destroying and severely impacting nearly 15,000 of them. Businesses that were thriving on September 10, employing people, building a positive future for themselves, were destroyed, and they

remain out of business 4½ months later. We are expected to lose nearly 150,000 jobs, and that is an unsustainable loss.

The number of private sector jobs sank 3 percent last year, more than twice the national rate. We are struggling to make sure the aid that was voted for at the end of last year gets out as quickly as possible, and especially gets into the hands of these small businesses that are desperate for some kind of assistance.

We also face a big job in cleaning up, repairing, and rebuilding the infrastructure. The attacks left 42 percent of Lower Manhattan's subway system unusable. That translates into significant disruptions in the daily commutes of 335,000 passengers who ride to Lower Manhattan every day.

We are going to be getting some positive plans adopted soon, we hope, that will show what needs to be done to repair this infrastructure. I know this body will be there to help.

I have been especially concerned about the air quality at and near ground zero. Many of our rescue workers, firefighters, police officers, construction workers, residents, and others have been complaining of respiratory problems. Some call them the World Trade Center cough or the 9-11 cough. It is a significant health problem.

I have visited with physicians who are treating the firefighters and the construction workers. They are concerned because a lot of people are really encountering severe respiratory problems and developing asthma. We have many families and residents who still are afraid to move back into their homes, leaving large parts of Lower Manhattan uninhabited, leaving buildings that were once prime real estate nearly empty.

I am pleased the Clean Air, Wetlands and Climate Change Subcommittee of the Environment and Public Works Committee has honored my request and will hold a hearing in New York City on these issues in a few weeks. We really do not know the effects of the exposure on those who have been most directly involved in the work at ground zero and others who are within the vicinity, but we owe it to them to find answers. We have to make sure we know what the health risks are for the children who are being asked to move back into the elementary schools that were vacated near ground zero. I am hopeful this hearing will get to the bottom of some of these issues.

We also have to be sure our workforce is not forgotten. So many of them need some extra unemployment insurance. So many are about to lose their health insurance.

I went to a hearing last week that was held with hundreds and hundreds of people. We had testimony from representatives of various groups, and the biggest concern among the workers who had worked in the World Trade Center or at a neighboring business

was that their health insurance policies were about to run out and they did not know where to turn.

We have been discussing what should be done on a recovery package for the Nation, but I know from firsthand experience we really must focus attention on New York's needs in terms of unemployment insurance, disaster unemployment assistance, and the extension of health care benefits in order to give some help to those people who, through no fault of their own, were left unemployed directly because of the attacks.

Similarly, we have to continue to support both the public and the private sector in meeting the needs that come out of 9-11.

I thank Chairman BAUCUS and ranking member Senator GRASSLEY for their help to Senator SCHUMER and myself as we have tried to draft policies that will make a direct impact on the financial burdens being shouldered by the public and private sector. We need tax incentives. We need bonding authority. We need advanced refunding authority. All of that has been worked through the Finance Committee. A similar proposal has passed the House. I am hopeful we will be able to get something along those lines through the Congress and to the President very soon, either standing alone or as part of a larger economic recovery proposal.

One issue that is now more pressing than when we left a month ago is the impact on States across the Nation of the economic slowdown and of 9-11. We are seeing increases in unemployment in many parts of the country. We see many people lose their health insurance. We expect to see millions more added to the Medicaid roles. It has been predicted that the number of children on Medicaid could increase as much as 11.3 percent. At a time when State budgets are already reeling from reduced revenues, when States—unlike the Federal Government—have to run a balanced budget, they cannot spend more than they take in. They may not have the resources needed to address these increasing health needs.

That is why I hope, in a bipartisan manner, we can provide some relief to States. They are desperate for it. Whether Republican or Democratic Governor, we are hearing they need help. They need help not only to meet health needs but also law enforcement and homeland security needs. If we do not provide direct assistance to cities and counties, they are going to be running in the red, with the overtime they are now paying and with the additional responsibilities imposed on police, firefighters, and emergency workers.

We have our work cut out for us. I am confident that under the leadership in this body and in the House and with the support of the administration we can meet the needs of New York and we can assure the people who were so directly devastated by these attacks that we stand with them.

Earlier today I was privileged to be at the White House. It was a nostalgic

return visit for me, sitting in the East Room, surrounded by my colleagues from New York, New Jersey, and Virginia, all of whom had gathered to witness the President signing the Victims Tax Relief Act, something I fought very hard for because it was a tangible way of providing assistance to those who were directly impacted with the loss of a loved one on 9-11. I am proud we included Oklahoma City victims and victims of the anthrax attacks because we need to demonstrate America is united not only in our war against terrorism but on behalf of the victims of terrorism. I was very proud when the President signed that bill, surrounded by so many of the families from New York and New Jersey with whom I have met, as well as other families from around the country who lost a loved one on one of the planes in the Pentagon attack or in the fields of Pennsylvania.

It was a very reassuring moment to see how all levels of government were supporting those who woke up on September 11—on a beautiful autumn day for flying, for going to work, for minding one's own business—and ended a day having lost a relative, a friend, knowing their lives would never be the same.

I strongly hope Congress will pass this resolution and reaffirm our commitment to New York by continuing to provide the much needed Federal assistance that New Yorkers require to recover from these horrific attacks that were, as we know so well, attacks on America.

I appreciate this opportunity to take a few minutes to set the stage and remind everyone that, although we face future challenges with the continuing war on terrorism to make sure national security is as strong as we can make it, to ensure we are doing everything possible to enhance our homeland security and that we take necessary steps to assure economic security in the face of the economic downturn and the attacks on 9-11, that we also remain united behind the needs of New York.

It is an honor to represent New York. It is often a challenge to convey the needs I see every day. I try to do my best to speak for those who will never stand in this Chamber but who are living every day with the consequences of those horrific attacks. It is such an honor to represent such brave and courageous Americans as I do in New York. I look forward to the continuing help I have received with such graciousness from my colleagues to make sure that New Yorkers know America stands with us.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CARNAHAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HOPE FOR CHILDREN ACT

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I move to proceed to H.R. 622, and I ask unanimous consent that the pending farm bill not be displaced by the adoption of this motion.

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

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 622) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the adoption credit, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2698

(Purpose: To provide incentives for an economic recovery, and for other purposes)

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I have an amendment at the desk and ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. DASCHLE], for himself and Mr. BAUCUS, proposes an amendment numbered 2698.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I express my appreciation to the distinguished Republican leader for this ongoing effort to try to get to this point. This is not what he would have subscribed to; this is not what I would have subscribed to necessarily.

Basically what this does is provide us with an opportunity to move forward on an economic stimulus package. It is open to amendment. But what I have done with the amendment I have just offered to the bill, H.R. 622, which is the adoption tax credit bill that had been on the calendar, is simply provide an opportunity now for us to move forward.

The amendment I have just offered is comprised of the four components I have been talking about on the floor and off the floor. The amendment includes, first, the bonus depreciation legislation, the tax rebate, the unemployment legislation, and the so-called FMAP, the resources provided to the States to help them offset the cost of Medicaid.

Those four components are components in various forms, of course, that have been supported by Republicans and Democrats. It is the right of any Senator now to offer an amendment,