

from 2000–2007 the median household income in Connecticut has increased by a mere 1 percent. Meanwhile, the cost of a gallon of gasoline in our State consistently tops the national average, and the cost of going to college in the State has risen by 29.1 percent since 1999.

For Connecticut, the need to act is clear. And with this bill, we are.

This legislation is paid for. The cost of these tax provisions will not, as the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 did, merely pass the cost on to our children and grandchildren. This bill provides crucial incentives for job creation, as well as middle-class tax relief, but it also pays for these benefits. It does so by changing the tax rules for executive compensation, and delays a rule that would provide incentives to firms operating abroad. And so not only do we hope to offset some of the economic ills that America is currently struggling with, this legislation also offers a big step toward restoring fiscal responsibility to our government, which this administration has utterly abandoned.

Now, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are opposed to this fiscally responsible legislation for no other reason than that they are opposed to paying for tax breaks—opposed to the belief that future generations should not be stuck with our bill.

I see it differently—as does the business community of our Nation which supports these offsets for a simple reason:

Because they recognize the benefits that this legislation will provide not just to their bottom lines but to our economy.

Unfortunately, some in this body remain unconvinced—unconvinced that these tax provisions will spur new job creation, move us further towards energy independence, and restart our economy.

On June 9, a consortium of more than 300 different American businesses signed a letter to Chairman BAUCUS and Ranking Member GRASSLEY urging the Senate to work together in a bipartisan manner to pass this bill. These businesses represent some of the largest employers in our Nation, and at this moment the partisan paralysis that is affecting this body has put them in an awkward position. Many of these provisions are set to expire in December, and now is the time many of these employers are working to plan ahead and solidify new contracts, and sign new employees. They are making decisions about their futures. A recent study estimated that if we do not extend the tax provisions in this bill, we will not only lose \$19 billion in clean energy investment, but also 116,000 potential green jobs.

It is time for us to recognize that to get our economy back on track, we must lead. We must make critical decisions about the future of our Nation. And above all, we must put politics aside and work on behalf of not our political parties but the American people.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critically important legislation.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 2 hours, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first hour and the Republicans controlling the next hour.

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes: Myself, MCCASKILL, FEINSTEIN, LANDRIEU, MURRAY, BOXER, STABENOW, KLOBUCHAR, and LINCOLN.

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

CHECKLIST FOR CHANGE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I take the floor today as the dean of the Democratic women in the Senate. I say to my colleagues and to all who are watching: We women are mad as hell, and we don't want to take it anymore. We are mad that in this institution, when all is said and done, more gets said than gets done.

We are here today, united as Democratic women, to be a voice, a voice for change. We have a checklist for change we think we can do before this Congress adjourns.

These are issues that focus on the big picture of what our country is facing, but they also focus on the impact these issues have on families. We look at macroissues that affect the world and the macaroni-and-cheese issues that affect families.

In order to get things done, women have checklists in their daily lives—whether it is to get the laundry done or pick the kids up from school. We have a checklist on what we want to do in terms of a legislative agenda. This is not about gender; it is about an agenda. We invite the good men of the Senate to join us, and we hope that people from the other side will join us. We want to work to bring about change, and we start with wanting to end the gridlock.

Look at these issues for which we stand. We want to provide equal pay for equal work, good jobs that stay in the United States, we want to make health care affordable, we want to take care of our military families and veterans. If they fought over there, they should have a safety net back here. We also want to restore America's credibility in the world, protect our environment. We are looking out for gas, and we are looking out for groceries. We want to make sure there is another FEMA. And, along the way, we protect the family checkbook. We want to

make sure we get rid of the boondoggles that are eating up our Federal budget.

For me, I am the leadoff. But every woman here has an issue to which she will be speaking. What do I want to speak to? I want to speak to equal pay for equal work.

Members might recall a few weeks ago we brought legislation to the floor to correct the gap in wage discrimination law. We lost that, but I said when the vote was over: The issue is not gone. I called upon the women to put their lipstick on, square their shoulders, suit up, and fight for an American revolution. This is why we are here today. This is another salvo.

Many people think, wage discrimination, didn't we solve that? No. Wage discrimination still exists. Women are earning just 77 cents for every dollar our male counterparts make. We can see this now in the famous Ledbetter v. Goodyear case. Lilly Ledbetter, a hard-working woman, challenged the system. She didn't find out until years later that she was being paid less than her male counterparts. She took it to the EEOC. The corporation fought her every step of the way. It ended up in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court made an outrageous decision. They said she waited too long to file her complaint. The Court also said she didn't do it in time.

We think it is about time we change the law. What we want to do is bring back the Lilly Ledbetter legislation called the Fair Pay Restoration Act. We want to bring it back up for a vote because equal pay for equal work is about fairness. It is about justice. It is about respect. It is going to close the loophole on the so-called statute of limitations on when one can file a wage discrimination case. We believe the current practice has been a good one, but we disagree with the Supreme Court.

We are going to bring it back up for a vote. We ask our colleagues to join us. We don't want our agenda to die in parliamentary entanglements. What we want to do is untangle this law and make sure women get equal pay and experience it in their personal checkbook, and we have to change the Federal lawbook.

We are ready. We are suited up. We have signed up. Join with us. We know the Presiding Officer is one of the great guys in the Senate who supports us. Before we go out at the end of this session, let's bring about change. Let's make America proud of their Congress. Let's turn the page.

I yield the floor to my new but very able and experienced colleague from Missouri, who has been fighting boondoggles in that Federal checkbook.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, the United States is so lucky to have the senior Senator from Maryland in this august body. She is smart and feisty, and she is not willing to yield any